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M. A. BEEDÉ





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SHELLEY AS A LITERARY CRITIC

by

Margaret Adah Beede

(A.B. and A.M., University of North Dakota, 1917 and 1922)

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## OUTLINE

### I Foreword

- A Purpose of the thesis: to examine Shelley's theories and practice of criticism, with a view to ascertaining his contributions and his place as a literary critic
- B Methods used: a consideration of the Defence in connection with similar works by Boccaccio and Sidney as well as with the critical productions of Boileau and Pope; a comparison of Shelley's aesthetic theories with those expressed by four other Romantics, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Keats; an examination of Shelley's application of his critical theories to specific authors
- C Form in which his criticism appears
  - 1 Primarily, the consideration of poetry from the aesthetic and ethical points of view
  - 2 Slightly, the consideration of poetry from the craftsman's point of view
  - 3 Appreciably, judgments of specific writers
- D Reasons for considering Shelley as a literary critic
  - 1 Interest shown by him in criticism of the fine arts
  - 2 Interest shown by him in literary criticism
  - 3 Position of the Defence in the history of literary criticism

### II Shelley's background as a factor in the formation of his ideas

- A Influence exerted by the age in which he lived
  - 1 Troubled condition of his world
    - a Sufferings of the common people
    - b No attempt by those in power to relieve this suffering
  - 2 Effect of this upon Shelley
    - a Efforts made by him as an individual to aid the distressed
    - b Efforts made by him as a writer to do the same
  - 3 Connection of these ideas with his critical theories
- B Influence exerted by circumstances of his life
  - 1 Many things disturbing to his peace of mind
    - a Domestic troubles and sorrows
    - b Continued unpopularity of his writings
  - 2 Effect of all this upon him



- a Is led to a consideration of abstract values
- b Finds in poetry the embodiment of his ideals
- c Is impelled toward the poetry of escape

C Influence exerted by his reading

- 1 Connection between his early reading and later aesthetic theories
- 2 Waning influence of Godwin and other rationalistic philosophers shown in his critical theories
- 3 Connection between his reading of Greek writers and his standards of judgment
- 4 Influence of his reading of contemporaries
- 5 Influence of the Bible
- 6 Influence of Plato

D Summary of influences

III Shelley's critical ideas as expressed in the Defence

A Objectives formulated in this examination

- 1 To reveal and interpret Shelley's ideas
- 2 To show them against a background of those expressed by other critics

B Specific background chosen for this study

- 1 The Defence considered as a late representative of the Italian-Elizabethan apologies for poetry and compared specifically with the works of Boccaccio and Sidney
- 2 The Defence considered in connection with the critical works of two Neo-Classicists, Boileau and Pope
- 3 Nature and purpose in general of these critical works
  - a The three apologies
  - b The works of the Neo-Classicists
    - (1) Some degree of similarity between them and the Defence
    - (2) Points of difference noted at the outset

C Detailed consideration of the Defence in connection with this background

- 1 The nature of poetry and the poets
  - a Shelley's initial ideas
    - (1) Contrast of his beginning with that of the others
    - (2) Shelley's initial definition of poetry compared with that of the others
    - (3) Shelley's ideas concerning the origin of poetry compared with those of the others
  - b Shelley and the Neo-Classicists on the matter of taste
  - c Shelley's broad definition of poetry





- d Shelley's conception of poetry in its "more restricted sense"
    - (1) His idea of the fame of the poet
    - (2) Ideas of the other critics on this point
    - (3) Shelley on the relationship between poetry and prose
    - (4) The question of metre
      - (a) Shelley's views
      - (b) Views of the other critics
  - e Shelley's conception of the essentials of poetry
    - (1) A harmony of thought as vital as a harmony of sound
      - (a) Ideas of the other critics on this point
      - (b) A poem versus a story of particular facts
    - (2) Idea of the divine nature of poetry—opinions of other critics
    - (3) Idea that poetry can transmute base metal
      - (a) Expression of a similar idea by Boileau
      - (b) Illustration of this idea in The Cenci
      - (c) Expression of a similar idea by Sidney
      - (d) Similarity between Shelley and Boileau in their application of this idea to the drama
  - f Shelley's idea of the presence of poetry in the work of many historians—poets in the broader sense
- 2 The effects of poetry upon society
- a The delight given by poetry
    - (1) Shelley's idea that poetry gives both pleasure and wisdom
    - (2) Agreement in general of the other critics with this idea
  - b The judges of poetry
    - (1) Shelley's idea that the judges should be the "selectest" of many generations
    - (2) Ideas of the other critics on this point
  - c Shelley's idea of the reason why Homer and his contemporaries gave delight
  - d The moral effect of poetry
    - (1) Shelley's idea that poetry is always moral
    - (2) Shelley's idea of the way in which poetry affects the reader through its operation on the imagination
    - (3) Shelley's idea of the superiority of this kind of moral effect to that produced by the "ethical sciences"
    - (4) Ideas of the other critics on the moral effect of poetry





- 3 Illustrations from history of the effect of poetry upon society
  - a Period of Greek history after the time of Homer
    - (1) Reasons why Shelley admires the Athenian drama
      - (a) His admiration for the poetry found in it
      - (b) His admiration for the principle of unity--comparison of his ideas on the unities with those of other critics
    - (2) Shelley's digression to an examination of the stage of his own time
      - (a) Criticism of it
      - (b) Attitude toward tragedy-comedy--comparison with that of other critics
      - (c) Praise of Shakespeare and Calderon
    - (3) Shelley's idea that the presence of poetic drama in an age coincides with a state of goodness in that age
    - (4) Ideas of other critics concerning Greek literature in general
    - (5) Shelley's explanation of the reasons why he has concentrated on the drama
  - b Period of civil wars and conquest--pleasure still given by genuine poetry
  - c Period of Roman history
    - (1) Shelley's idea of the poetry of Rome
    - (2) Ideas of the other critics on this point
  - d Period of transition from ancient to modern times
    - (1) Saving presence of poetry in the Christian and chivalric systems of thought--some of his ideas here compared with those of Boccaccio and Boileau
    - (2) Beneficent effects of this poetry and growth of the poetry of love--ideas on this point compared with those expressed by Boileau
  - e Specific consideration of the greatness of Dante and Milton
    - (1) Different from other critics in his appreciation of these poets
    - (2) Like other critics in his admiration for Homer
- 4 Refutation of charges brought against poetry
  - a More direct answers to many charges found in the works of Boccaccio and Sidney
  - b Indirect answers to many of the same charges found in the Defence
  - c Direct answer given by Shelley to argument of utility only
    - (1) Answer based on definition of utility
      - (a) Utility in the narrower sense, and attack on the rationalistic sciences
      - (b) Utility in the broader sense--ends of this utility served by poetry



- (2) Comparison of his answer with that given by the other apologists
- d Comparison of Shelley's ideas on the utility of poetry with those of the Neo-Classicists
- 5 Final consideration of the poets and poetry
  - a The question of the inspiration of genius
    - (1) Shelley's idea of poetry as the result of the moment of inspiration—ideas of the other critics on this point
    - (2) Shelley's idea that the best parts of poetry are not produced by toil and study
      - (a) Disagreement here with many critics, especially the Neo-Classicists
      - (b) Critical consideration of this idea
  - b The nature of a poet in connection with the nature of genuine poetry
    - (1) Shelley's idealistic view of poetry
    - (2) Shelley's idealistic view of the poet
    - (3) Ideas of the other critics on the nature of the poet
      - (a) Thought of his high-mindedness found in all
      - (b) Idea of the poet's being a "good" man strong in Shelley
    - (4) Shelley's defense of the poet against his calumniators
  - c Shelley's concluding idea: poets as "the unacknowledged legislators of the world"

#### D Summary of ideas

### IV Shelley's critical theories in relation to those of the other major Romantics--Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Keats

#### A Concerning the nature of poetry

- 1 Definitions of poetry
  - a Idealized nature of poetry seen in Shelley's definitions
  - b Idealistic conception of poetry noticeable in those given by the other Romantics also--less in Byron's
- 2 Subject-matter of poetry
  - a Shelley's idea influenced by his broad definition and moral view of poetry
  - b Wordsworth's idea similar in some respects, but different in his selection of a particular class of characters for representation
  - c Coleridge's idea similar to Shelley's in some respects, but has more to do with the supernatural than Shelley's
  - d Byron's idea different in his stressing of facts and conception of love as a theme for poetry
  - e Keats's idea closer to Wordsworth's than Shelley's



## e Purpose or end of poetry

## a Aim of poetry in general

- (1) Shelley's ideas
- (2) Wordsworth's ideas similar
- (3) Coleridge's ideas like Shelley's except  
in their aesthetic conception of the beautiful
- (4) Byron's ideas somewhat similar to Shelley's
- (5) Keats's ideas similar to Shelley's

## b The question of didacticism in poetry

- (1) Shelley's views on this point
- (2) Revelation of some similarity in Wordsworth's  
views, but difference in conception of poetic  
method and also difference in actual practice
- (3) Coleridge's views much closer to Shelley's
- (4) Slight similarity to Shelley's in Byron's  
views, but impression given of little serious  
concern over this question
- (5) Few ideas expressed by Keats on this question,  
but similarity to Shelley's views noticed

## c Characteristics of the best type of poetry

- (1) Shelley's opinions
- (2) Similarity to Shelley's ideas noticeable in  
some of Wordsworth's thought
- (3) Similarity to Shelley's in many respects, al-  
though characterized more by analytical than  
rhapsodical quality
- (4) Slight similarity to Shelley's, but influence  
upon his ideas of admiration for Pope and  
the precepts of Horace
- (5) Keats's early views different from Shelley's;  
more mature views closer to Shelley's

B Concerning the nature of the poet

## 1 Shelley's ideas

2 Wordsworth's ideas like Shelley's in some respects, but some-  
what different in concept of the poet as a prophet and of  
the "poetic temperament"; farther from Shelley's in con-  
cept of the poet's practice

## 3 Coleridge's ideas

a Like Shelley's in concept of deep sensibility of poet,

b Minimizing of the subjective element different from  
ideas of other Romantics

c Concept of the end of all genius as ideal similar to  
Shelley's

d Concept of Shakespeare as embodiment of true poetic  
qualities

e Concept of the imagination

- (1) A great unifying and creative force
- (2) A realizing and disrealizing faculty--latter  
quality not stressed by Shelley





- f Concept of poetic characteristics in general
- g Concept of "poetic temperament" closer to Shelley's ideas than Wordsworth's
- 4 Byron's ideas similar to Shelley's in concept of the poet's two personalities, but different in his thought of some poets' being mentally afflicted and in slight stress laid on inspiration of the poet
- 5 Keats's ideas
  - a Similar to Shelley's in idealized conception of the nature of the poet, but with the addition of the thought of "Negative Capability"
  - b Idea of close connection between the poet and the spirit of beauty
  - c Similarity to Shelley's in thought of the poet's chameleonic temperament
  - d Other likenesses and differences between the concepts of the two men

### C Concerning the form of poetry and matters of poetic style

- 1 Preferences expressed for specific types of poetry
  - a Shelley's ideas
    - (1) Thought of poets' being influenced in their choice of form and their poetic style by the age in which they live
    - (2) Preference for the drama
  - b Wordsworth's ideas
    - (1) Attention paid to the ballad and other old forms
    - (2) Similarity to Shelley's in thought that every writer creates the taste for his work
  - c Coleridge's attitude toward ballads similar to Wordsworth's
  - d Byron's ideas
    - (1) Lack of sympathy with the epic
    - (2) Lack of sympathy with Petrarch's sonnets--attitude here different from Shelley's
    - (3) Preferences in matter of form influenced by admiration for Pope
  - e Keats's ideas
    - (1) Like Shelley's in that he says the least about the form in which he attained the greatest fame
    - (2) Slightly different from Shelley's in attitude toward spontaneous writing
    - (3) Like Shelley's in preference shown for the drama
- 2 Attitude toward poetic diction
  - a Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction
  - b Shelley's idea of poetic diction different
    - (1) Reliance on intuitive good judgment of poet
    - (2) Shelley's poetic practice in The Cenci
    - (3) His realization of the necessity of style in a dramatic composition
    - (4) His reasons for avoiding a mere system of words



- c Coleridge's ideas
  - (1) Like Shelley's in thought of indissoluble connection between ideas and their expression
  - (2) Like Shelley's and Wordsworth's in preference for simplicity in diction
  - (3) Different from Shelley's in considering poetry more from the craftsman's point of view
  - (4) Like Shelley's in objections to Wordsworth's theory, although more concrete and definite in statement of objections
  - (5) Like Shelley's in conception of poetic taste, although more definite and specific in their explanations; also, in idea of the imaginative insight of genius
- d Byron's ideas--difference between these and Shelley's
- e Keats's ideas
  - (1) Interest in poetic diction
  - (2) Critical point of view of languages in general
- 3 Attitude toward question of metre
  - a Concurrence of Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge in idea that metre is not essential to poetry
  - b Modifications of this view by each critic
- 4 Attitude toward relationship of poetry and prose
  - a Shelley's ideas
  - b Wordsworth's ideas like Shelley's in thought of no distinction between poetry and prose, but different in reason given for this position
  - c Coleridge's ideas
    - (1) Like Shelley's in thought that essential qualities of poetry lie in the spirit rather than in accidental differences between it and prose
    - (2) Influenced by application of his cardinal principle of aesthetics--multitude in unity--a position suggestive of Shelley's ideas
    - (3) Curiously similar to Shelley's in thought that some prose is in reality poetry

D Résumé of points of view expressed in this chapter

## V Shelley's criticism of other writers

### A Opinions expressed of the ancient Greeks

- 1 Of their literature in general
- 2 Of specific writers: Homer and Plato

### B Little consideration given to the ancient Romans

### C Opinions expressed of the Italian writers

- 1 Boccaccio
- 2 Dante
- 3 Petrarch





4 Ariosto

5 Tasso

D Opinions expressed of the Spanish dramatist, Calderon

E Opinions expressed of French writers

1 The philosophers of his youth: d'Holbach, Helvetius,  
Condorcet, Voltaire

2 Rousseau

F Consideration given to a few German writers

1 Wieland

2 Schiller

3 Goethe

G Much attention paid to English writers

1 Those of the past

a Milton

b Shakespeare

c Bacon

2 Those of Shelley's own time

a Minor writers

(1) Charles Ollier

(2) B. W. Procter

(3) Thomas Jefferson Hogg

b More important writers

(1) Mrs. Hemans

(2) Mary Shelley

(3) Leigh Hunt

(4) William Godwin

(5) Thomas Love Peacock

(6) Charles Lamb

(7) Thomas Moore

c The other Romantic poets

(1) Wordsworth

(2) Southey

(3) Coleridge

(4) Scott

(5) Keats

(6) Byron

H Résumé of Shelley's opinions

VI Conclusions: Shelley's contributions to criticism

A Things to be considered in any appraisal of Shelley's ideas

1 No systematic arrangement of his opinions

2 Close interweaving of his aesthetic and ethical ideas

a Shelley a reformer as well as an artist

b Stress on the power of love to bring about a  
change in the world

c Emphasis on the moral effect of poetry--quicken-  
ing love by its stimulation of the imagination



B Consideration of his ideas in their specific setting

1 Theories expressed in the Defence

- a Many of them similar to those found in the works of the other critics
  - (1) Admiration for Greek poetry and the unity displayed there--Shelley's difference in emphasis
  - (2) Idea of the function of poetry--phases stressed by Shelley
  - (3) High regard for the poet
    - (a) More idealized in Shelley's work
    - (b) Characterized by stress on the moment of inspiration and the minimizing of the poet's toil
- b Relationship between the Defence and the apologies of Boccaccio and Sidney--similarity and points of difference
- c Shelley's emphasis on "moral idealisms"
  - (1) His connection of this idea with that of the moral effect produced by all good poetry
  - (2) His combination of aesthetic theory with ethical concept--one of the distinguishing marks of the Defence
    - (a) Moral end of poetry admitted by the other critics
    - (b) Difference seen in Shelley's conception of the peculiar way in which poetry, through its operation on the imagination, produces this effect
- d Shelley's broader definition of poetry--another distinguishing mark of the Defence
  - (1) Influence on his attitude toward metre
  - (2) This attitude similar to Sidney's
- e Attention paid by Shelley to harmony of thought in a poem as well as harmony of sound, also to the knowledge of human nature exhibited--similarity to position of Boileau and Pope
- f Chief points of difference between Shelley and the Neo-Classicists
  - (1) Stress on the imagination in the Defence
  - (2) Minimizing of labor and pains in the production of a poem
  - (3) Stress on the inspiration of genius
  - (4) Emphasis on feeling greater in the Defence than that on reason--evidenced by the nature of this work in contrast to the concrete and tangible advice given to authors in the critical works of the Neo-Classicists

2 Theories compared with those of the other Romantic critics



- a Likenesses
- b Differences--ideas peculiarly Shelley's
  - (1) Greater idealization of poetry and its subject-matter
  - (2) Broader definition of poetry
  - (3) Greater stress on the revitalizing and regenerating power of poetry as an art
  - (4) Thought of the poet as among the happiest and best of men
  - (5) Inspirational and rhapsodical nature of Shelley's work
- 3 Judgments given of specific writers
  - a Revelation of discrimination of mind and depth of taste
  - b Stress on the principle of unity
  - c Attention paid to poetry that reveals imagination
  - d Application of his broader definition of poetry
  - e Other poetic qualities appealing to Shelley--those that usually characterize a work of art
  - f Many of his criteria for the judgment of a novel valuable to-day
- C The placing of Shelley as a critic
  - 1 What he is not
  - 2 What he appears primarily to be--a Romantic
- D Final estimate of his criticism

## VII Summary of the dissertation





## FOREWORD

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Shelley's theories and practice of criticism, as they appear in his Defence of Poetry, his letters, his Prefaces to various poems, and the poems themselves. The method used in this investigation will be that of comparison or contrast of his ideas with the opinions of other critics: his Defence will be examined in connection with similar works by two other apologists, Boccaccio and Sidney, as well as with the critical productions of two Neo-Classicists, Boileau and Pope; his poetic theories will also be considered in juxtaposition with those expressed by four other Romantic writers—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Keats. In addition to this revealing of his theories against a background of those advanced by other critics, his application of these theories to specific writers will be studied. From such an investigation conclusions will be drawn concerning the contributions made by Shelley to criticism and his place as a critic.

Much of Shelley's criticism takes the form of a consideration of poetry from the aesthetic point of view, especially in the Defence. It will be shown, however, that even in this aesthetic consideration of poetry the ethical conception of his art is just



as important to Shelley. One critic remarks in this connection:

There was always something either spiritual or moral in his [Shelley's] idea of beauty; he never conceived of aesthetics as a thing apart from ethics...

Shelley also pays some attention to poetry from the craftsman's point of view, but this is slight compared with the emphasis he places on other points. In addition, his criticism appears in the form of specific judgments of specific writers, these found in his letters as well as in the Defence, and occasionally in the Prefaces to his poems, with a little in the poems themselves.

There appears to be ample justification for considering Shelley as a literary critic. In the first place, he seemed to take an active interest in the criticism of all the arts, as shown in the letters he wrote from Italy after he had come into contact with the excellent specimens of painting, sculpture, and architecture found there. One man has considered Shelley's views on the fine arts of sufficient importance to justify an essay on this subject. The first sentence of the essay follows:

Shelley's attitude toward fine art is not one of the most significant or the most important aspects of his mind, but, even as a single element in a rich intellect, it possesses sufficient interest to justify independent treatment, and it is instructive to a high degree if regarded as an illustration of the manner in which poets and men of letters in general look upon art, which is not that in which





artistic production is usually contemplated by the artists themselves. 1

In addition to this interest in the fine arts Shelley, although never looking upon himself as a professional critic, showed a very definite interest in literary criticism. The special attention which he paid to this subject is evidenced by the numerous remarks scattered through his letters concerning poetry and the poets. Also, in the Prefaces to his major poems, he theorizes about his art and makes practical application of various principles to the specific work under consideration. In his poetry itself there are some reflections of these ideas: Alastor, for instance, has been interpreted by some critics as a mirror of Shelley's views on the nature of the poet; Adonais also contains some passages of interest in this connection. On the whole, however, there are few critical ideas in his poetry as compared with those expressed in the other types of work mentioned.

Most important of all, Shelley took the trouble to write a Defence of Poetry, this work showing clearly his deep interest in the problems raised by any consideration of his art. The Defence, moreover, as an apology for poetry, holds a definite place in the history of literary criticism; it is related to a long line of similar productions by Italian and English Renaissance authors. Such a work alone would be of sufficient importance to warrant the consideration of Shelley as a literary critic.

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<sup>1</sup>Garnett, Richard, Essays of an Ex-Librarian, "Shelley's Views on Art," p. 331.



Least, but by no means of the least importance, is the fact that the theories of a poet when he turns critic are likely to be of interest to others. If, as Mr. Garnett states in the sentence quoted above, the opinions of men of letters on painting and the allied arts are considered of value, how much more valuable will be the ideas expressed by them concerning that type of art which they practice. Thus, when Shelley talks about poetry, the world is inclined to give him some degree of attention.



## CHAPTER I

### SHELLEY'S BACKGROUND

There are undoubtedly elements in the background of every writer that play some part in the formation of his ideas. It will be the purpose of this chapter to suggest, where possible, any effect that the conditions of Shelley's age, the circumstances of his own life, or the choice of his reading may have had upon his critical theories.

Shelley's world was a troubled one. During his childhood and young boyhood England and France were hurling themselves against each other in a furious conflict. From 1803 to 1815 the European world was again in chaos; Shelley was twenty-three by the time Napoleon was finally disarmed and successfully isolated. As usual in any war, the common people bore the brunt of the struggle<sup>1</sup>. The situation in Ireland was also bad as a result of misgovernment, misunderstanding, and exactions, all of this antagonism occasioning much suffering on the masses of the people here too.

Other factors aside from the Napoleonic Wars contributed to the distress of the common people in England, conditions in agriculture and industry being especially bad. Although the food supply and the national wealth were increased as a result of the system of enclosures, "the increased wealth had gone chiefly in rent to the landlord, in tithe to the parson, and to the pocket of the more fortunate of the big farmers. The lower middle class had become poor, and the poor

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<sup>1</sup>Trevelyan, George Macaulay, British History in the Nineteenth Century, p. 128.





had become paupers." Nor was the lot of the workers in industry any better; the conditions under which the miners labored were almost unbelievable. Furthermore, under the penal code of the time the severest punishments were meted out, and death might as well have been the fate of all offenders, so unspeakable were the gaols. All of these conditions were aggravated by the fact that those in power acquiesced in them or remained indifferent.

The effect of all this upon a man as sensitive and idealistic as Shelley was inevitable. There was aroused in him a hatred for oppressions of any sort as well as a desire to be of assistance to the underprivileged; he endeavored to make a practical application of his idealistic theories. One of his biographers remarks:

...Shelley's large benevolence exhibited among the poor lace-makers of Marlowe must have made more than a passing impression. 'The poorest cottagers,' wrote Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, 'knew and benefited by his thoroughly practical and unselfish nature during his residence at Marlowe, where he would visit them, and having gone through a course of medical study in order that he might assist them with advice, would commonly administer the tonic, which such systems usually require, of a good basin of broth or pea-soup. And I believe I am infringing upon no private domestic delicacy when repeating that he has been known upon an immediate urgency to purloin—"Convey the wise it call"—a portion of the warmest of Mrs. Shelley's wardrobe to protect some poor starving sister.' 6

The expedition of young Shelley to Ireland in 1812 is well known; here also he endeavored to alleviate distress. All of these actions were

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 156, and Robinson, Howard, A History of Great Britain, p. 690.

<sup>3</sup>Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 157, and Robinson, op. cit., p. 730.

<sup>4</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 732.

<sup>5</sup>Weaver, Bennett, Toward the Understanding of Shelley, pp. 47-48.

<sup>6</sup>Peck, Walter Edwin, Shelley, vol. I, p. 523,



a manifestation of the interest he always showed not only in specific acts of charity to individuals, but also in the doing of anything which might bring mankind nearer to the goal he visioned—universal happiness. As Mr. Peck remarks,

While endeavoring to alleviate the present suffering of those about him he did not lose sight of the necessity for universal relief through universal reform; and if he busied himself with devising associations for the benefit of the Irish, the Welsh, and the English, it is clear from his pamphlets and letters that he seized upon any of these chiefly because they promised well as a starting-point for the greater operations of the 'self-constituted steward of universal happiness.' 1

This impatience with injustice and oppression, this Messianic desire to change conditions for the better, are fundamental in Shelley's thinking and actions. His prose works illustrate this, as does his poetry also. Prometheus Unbound contains one of the best descriptions of that time for which Shelley longed, when hatred and oppression would be conquered by love and earth become a veritable paradise. In his judgments of specific authors his praise of those writers who show a strong love of liberty is always high.

Yet even in his impatience with existing conditions Shelley never counseled revolution, and showed himself opposed to violence. He says:

...If you are convinced of the truth of your cause, trust wholly to its truth; if you are not convinced, give it up. In no case employ violence; the way to liberty and happiness is never to transgress the rules of virtue and justice. 4

Be free and be happy, but first be wise and good. For you are not all wise and good...You may be at some time, and then Ireland will be an earthly Paradise. 5

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<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., p. 234.

<sup>2</sup>Such works as Address to the Irish People, A Philosophical View of Reform, and Declaration of Rights.

<sup>3</sup>Such poems as Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, Oedipus Tyrannus: Or Swellfoot the Tyrant, The Mask of Anarchy, and Hellas.

<sup>4</sup>Prose Works, vol. I, p. 234.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 235.



It is always a change in the inner man that Shelley emphasizes. This change, in both the oppressor and the oppressed, will bring about an amelioration of deplorable conditions, he believes.

In connection with this change of heart the force always stressed by Shelley is love. The thought of it as an efficacious principle is expressed as early as 1812 in his Declaration of Rights, where he would make use of it as one of the agents in healing strife in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Three years later, in his Alastor, he represents a curse as resting upon the poet because he has been too self-centered and has not loved enough, as well as upon those who have shown him coldness and indifference. The same emphasis on love as a guiding principle is found in The Mask of Anarchy, written seven years afterward. It is love, represented by Asia, that wins the victory over oppression in Prometheus Unbound; the same idea is implicit in the final chorus of Hellas.

What connection does all this have with his critical ideas? It will be seen that it is love that Shelley stresses in the Defence, that he calls "the great secret of morals." This love will be quickened by the imagination, which has been stirred by the reading of poetry. Thus Shelley represents this art as having a definite moral effect upon mankind; in fact, it is upon the moral effect that he will be seen to insist. It will be shown also that through his idea of the peculiar way in which poetry acts upon the imagination, together with his conception of the power possessed by the imagination

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 287.





to quicken love as a moral agent, there will be effected a combination of aesthetic and ethical ideas that is one of his most striking and original contributions to criticism.

As Shelley, the young idealist, found that his early efforts at ameliorating conditions did not bear the fruit for which he had hoped, he thus turned to his art for assistance, in his critical theories giving evidence of his firm conviction that poetry can succeed where other methods have failed; that the poetic, artistic method of includating morals is by far the most powerful; that it possesses something which rationalistic systems and "ethical sciences" do not have; that it will produce beneficent results through its quickening of the power of love and the consequent arousing of sympathy for one's fellow-man. All this will be shown in the discussion of the Defence in the next chapter.

But it was not only conditions in the world at large that were distressing to Shelley; the events in his own personal and domestic life added to his troubles. He was not very old before he discovered the lack of congeniality between himself and his father, whom he grew to look upon as a tyrant. With his usual propensity for translating deeds into actions, he made another application of his strong desire to bring about the freedom of individuals from what he considered oppression, in his first marriage. When misunderstanding resulted in a separation, he found himself branded as a wife-deserter in the eyes of the public, that already looked upon him as an atheist,



this attitude the result of his youthful naïve gesture in The Necessity of Atheism. The later suicides of Harriet Shelley and Fannie Imlay brought him deep sorrow. Added to this were the indignation and grief occasioned by the refusal of the Lord Chancellor to award him the custody of the children born to him and Harriet. Still later came the death of his young daughter, Mary's child, and that of his oldest son, on whom the parents had set their affections. This calamity, following the earlier sorrows, was a crushing blow to him.

In addition to this deep personal grief he felt indignation and sorrow that his fellow-men failed, as it seemed to him, completely to understand the motives for actions that had resulted so unfavorably on his reputation. The English people, for whom he had it in his heart to do so much, showed either indifference to him or aversion, this position reflected in their attitude toward his writings, which continued to prove unpopular. Everything in the scheme of things seemed to have gone awry for him. Two women with whom he had been closely associated had taken their own lives--and the conviction must have grown upon him that in the case of one he was morally responsible for the state of mind that had induced such an action, even though at the time of his separation from her, he had been conscious of no feeling of wrong-doing. In spite of the fact that he felt no desire to injure others--quite the contrary, in fact--the thread of human relationships had become for



him inextricably tangled. Two children were now dead, and two others separated from him forever by legal barriers. The common people in England, whose situation he still deplored, would have nothing of him or his writings; therefore his ardent wish to regenerate the world could bear no fruit.

All of these things drove him in upon himself, to a consideration of abstract values, to a search for that ideal Beauty and Goodness and Truth that would not change, but remain forever permanent amid the vicissitudes of human life. Such a search is reflected in his aesthetic theories, especially as they are given in the Defence, where he looks upon poetry as the embodiment of these ideal qualities, as the source of them for its readers, as the cause which, through its action upon the imagination, will result in the quickening of love and the bringing closer together in sympathetic communion of man and his fellow-man. The reading of poetry will help, he believes, in the developing of man's awareness and comprehension of love, as well as the faculty itself. When mankind are united by love, discord and misery will have passed away from the earth. This idea is strongly evident in his critical theories and dominant in his poetry. Browning, in his essay on Shelley, says this of the poet:

His noblest and predominating characteristic is his simultaneous perception of Power and Love in the absolute, and of Beauty and Good in the concrete, while he throws, from his poet's station between both, swifter, subtler, and more numerous films for the connection of each with each than have been thrown by any modern artificer of whom I have knowledge,





proving how, as he says--

'The spirit of the worm beneath the sod  
In love and worship blends itself with God.' 1

Shelley was also impelled by his griefs and disappointments toward a type of poetry highly fanciful and seemingly removed from human interests--a poetry of escape. Mrs. Shelley, in her note on The Witch of Atlas,<sup>2</sup> attributes its composition to these feelings in its author. In the Defence it will be shown that Shelley stresses the action of poetry as a regenerating agent, but also says that it "defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions."

There is another line of influence to be considered, that exerted by his reading. Because of the extended nature of this reading it will be impossible in these few pages to attempt a comprehensive discussion of it, nor would such a discussion always have a bearing upon his critical theories. Therefore, an idea merely of the nature and extent of it will be given here, together with the suggestion of any connection that may appear between it and his critical writings.

In Shelley's schooldays at Eton books on chemistry and magic, as well as romances, were favorites with him. Mr. Peck quotes Medwin as saying that Burger's Lenore attracted Shelley<sup>3</sup> strongly, as did also the romances of Anne Radclyffe. Shel-

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by C. H. Herford, in Browning, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>Hutchinson, Thomas, Complete Poetical Works, pp. 382-383.

<sup>3</sup>Vol. I, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 54.



ley was familiar, too, with the American writer, Charles Brockden Brown, for whom he expresses admiration in his critical remarks on specific authors.

Mr. Peck says concerning Shelley's reading at Oxford:

Together he and Hogg read and discussed Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Hume's Essays, Dugald Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy, an English version of M. Dacier's French text of the Platonic Dialogues, Floyer Sydenham's translation of Plato's Republic, several of Thomas Taylor's translations of the Dialogues of Plato, and the Abbe Barruel's Memoirs of the History of Jacobinism (translated by Clifford). Besides these, Hogg informs us that Shelley read, at Oxford, 'relations of travelers in the East,' including probably Sir William Jones' Poems, other dialogues of Plato in the original Greek, the works of Plutarch, Lander's Gebir, Shakespeare and the Attic tragedians, particularly Euripides, and that he amused himself by turning the prose of Livy or Sallust into Latin heroic or elegiac verse. <sup>1</sup>

One cannot but be struck by the important place taken by Plato in this list, a position which he always occupies, as will be shown in other reading lists of Shelley. Hogg's remark about the exercises with which Shelley amused himself in his college days is interesting in the light of the broader definition of poetry given by him in the Defence, where some historians are granted the title of poets, Livy being spoken of as "instinct with poetry."

Other critics would make some additions to this list, Mr. MacDonald suggesting Sir James Lawrence's novel, Empire of the Naires,<sup>2</sup> a view concurred in by Mr. Walter Graham. Miss Keller<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Vol. I, pp. 75-76.

<sup>2</sup>MacDonald, Daniel, The Radicalism of Shelley and Its Sources.

<sup>3</sup>"Shelley and the Empire of the Nairs," PMLA, vol. 40, pp. 881-891.



feels that there is a definite connection between Shelley's Queen Mab<sup>1</sup> and Volney's Les Ruines. Mr. MacDonald also mentions Miss Owenson's Missionary, an Indian Tale; Memories relatives a la Revolution Francaise, by Louvet; the works of Godwin, Holbach, and Condorcet; the philosophical writings of Locke, Kant, Sir William Drummond, and Spinoza. Mr. A. H. Benham, also, believes that Shelley<sup>2</sup> read Spinoza extendedly. Both Mr. MacDonald, and Mr. George Barnett Smith in his critical biography of the poet add Berkeley to this list, reaching the conclusion that Shelley turned from Locke to this philosopher. This opinion seems reasonable, as far as Shelley's critical theories are concerned, for his stressing so strongly the inspiration of the poet (discussed in Chapter II of this paper) and his idea of poetry's being a divine interpenetration of the mind of the poet (discussed in Chapters II and III), as well as the decidedly idealistic turn of mind shown in the Defence, would surely be indicative of the greater influence of Berkeley.

There is much evidence to show Shelley's early reading of Godwin and the French philosophers; Shelley himself, according to Mr. Peck, in a letter to Godwin in 1812, "mentions reading the works of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus, Locke, Hume Reid, and other metaphysical works; Godwin and D'Holbach."<sup>3</sup> Mr. MacDonald

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<sup>1</sup>"Shelley's Queen Mab and Volney's Les Ruines," Englische Studien, vol. XXII, 9ff; reviewed by Charles Grosvenor Osgood, Jr., in American Journal of Philology, 19, pp. 338-339.

<sup>2</sup>"Shelley and Spinoza," Nation, vol. 102: sup. 16-17 (February 10, 1916), p. 318.

<sup>3</sup>Vol. I, p. 257.





speaks of Godwin as Shelley's "master," a view disputed by Miss Clarice Ruth Gendelmeyer.<sup>1</sup> Mr. S. F. Gingerich believes that Godwin's influence was strong throughout all of Shelley's life.<sup>2</sup> Considering Godwin in connection with Shelley's critical ideas, one must disagree with this point of view; although both Shelley and Godwin believe in the perfectibility of man, it is the potentialities inherent in the natural man in which Shelley is interested; it is the inner change that he emphasizes in the Defence. Godwin would change men through education first of all, while Shelley feels that a change in the heart of man must come first in order to bring<sup>ab</sup> out the remedying of institutions. This change in the inner man described in the Defence as a result of the reading of poetry in no way suggests Godwin's opinions of the necessary steps to be taken for the improvement of man. Furthermore, it will be shown that Shelley, in the Defence, attacks the rationalistic systems of thought with which he became acquainted in his youth, because, through their lack of the poetical element, they have not succeeded in bettering conditions in the world, have acted only upon the external man when they did act, and have left the mind of man untouched, with himself a slave.

Mrs. Shelley writes of Shelley's reading in 1814 and 1815:

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<sup>1</sup>"The Utopias of Shelley and the Philosophy Influencing the Conception of Each," a Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Washington, 1934.

<sup>2</sup>"Shelley's Doctrine of Necessity versus Christianity," PMLA, vol. 33, pp. 444-474.



In the scanty journals kept during those years I find a record of the books that Shelley read during several years. During the years of 1814 and 1815 the list is extensive. It includes, in Greek, Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and Diogenes Paeterius. In Latin, Petronius, Suetonius, some of the works of Cicero, a large proportion of those of Seneca and Livy, Wordsworth's Excursion, Southey's Madoc and Thalaba, Locke On the Human Understanding, Bacon's Novum Organum. In Italian, Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. In French, the Reveries d'un Solitaire, of Rousseau. To these may be added several modern books of travel. He read few novels. 1

At least six of the names mentioned here appear in the Defence.

Of the reading for 1817, Mrs. Shelley says:

His readings this year were chiefly Greek. Besides the Hymns of Homer and the Iliad, he read the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the Symposium of Plato, and Arrian's Historica Indica. In Latin, Apuleius alone is named. In English, the Bible was his constant study; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening. Among these evening readings I find also mentioned the Faerie Queen; and other modern works, the production of his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore, and Byron. 2

Medwin is given as the authority for the following remark quoted by Mr. Weaver concerning Shelley's idea of the nature of a good library:

Shelley's library was a very limited one. He used to say that a good library consisted not of many books, but a few chosen ones; and asking him what he considered such, he said, 'I'll give you my list: The Greek Plays, Plato, Lord Bacon's Works, Shakespere, the Old Dramatists, Milton, Göthe and Schiller, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and Machiavelli and Guicciardini, not forgetting Calderon; and last, yet first, the Bible. 3

The appearance of the Greek writers on these reading lists is

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<sup>1</sup>Hutchinson, Thomas, op. cit., p. 524.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 547.

<sup>3</sup>Toward the Understanding of Shelley, p. 23.



significant; one of Shelley's principal criteria of judgment, expressed in the Defence and applied elsewhere, is the standard of unity, the harmonious relationship of parts to one another and to the whole, which he will be shown as admiring in the Athenian drama. The including of Bacon's name on these lists is also significant; in the Defence Shelley, by an application of his broader definition of poetry, will be seen to regard Bacon as a poet. Homer, Dante, and Milton are eulogized in the same essay; they are also used by Shelley as illustrations of certain phases of his poetic theories. Shakespeare and Calderon are also ranked high in the Defence and used by Shelley for the same purpose as that indicated before. The same will be found true of Petrarch and Dante. The influence of Italian literature in general upon Shelley has been ably discussed by a modern critic, Mr.

<sup>1</sup>  
R. W. King.

Shelley's relation to the literary thought of his own age is suggested by one of Mrs. Shelley's remarks quoted above. As far as the influence of his contemporaries upon his own poetry is concerned, Mr. Peck believes that the opposite was the case, that wherever other poets had personal contact with Shelley or read his works, they felt Shelley's influence. <sup>2</sup> It was Shelley's idea, expressed in the Defence, that there is an influence belonging to the age which is common to all writers of that age. This principle

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<sup>1</sup>"Italian Influence on English Scholarship and Literature during the Romantic Revival," MLR, vol. 21, pp. 24-33, VI ff.

<sup>2</sup>Vol. II, p. 209.





might be applied to Shelley's critical theories, where the influence of Romanticism seems apparent. It will be seen that Shelley's stress on the imagination is very great, that it is at the root of his idea of the way in which poetry produces its moral effect. An emphasis on feeling, "otherworldliness," a highly idealistic view of the nature of poetry and the poet, a marked propensity for making the world over anew through the action of poetry, a consideration of the poetry of escape—all of these points will be noticed in the consideration of Shelley's theories in the chapters that follow, and all of them are characteristic of the Romantic attitude. In the second chapter these qualities—especially the stress on the imagination—will be shown in contrast to the emphasis of the Neo-Classicists on reason, on form and precision of structure; in the third, they will be revealed against a background of similar ideas expressed by the other Romantics of Shelley's day. A feeling for nature is also apparent in Shelley's poetry, but less in his criticism<sup>s</sup>, except in two instances, where he is discussing the work of Boccaccio and Rousseau. The latter critic appears to have had an influence on Shelley in the matter of stress on feeling, but there is little reflection in Shelley's poetry and practically none in his critical theories of the "noble savage" idea, the return to the simple and primitive recommended by Rousseau.

In the quotations given above to show Shelley's reading, the Bible receives prominent mention. In his recent work Toward the Understanding of Shelley Mr. Weaver has made a painstaking investi-



gation of the influence upon Shelley of the Scriptures, taking as his thesis the idea that this poet was a late representative of the Hebrew prophets, this point not appearing satisfactorily established, although the influence of the Bible upon Shelley the poet is well demonstrated. Little is said concerning his critical theories, where the effect of Shelley's Scriptural reading might easily be suggested, especially<sup>in</sup> his looking upon love as "the great secret of morals," as the ameliorating agent for all the ills of mankind, and<sup>in</sup> the combination of this power with his aesthetic theories, as expressed in the Defence. Furthermore, in the same essay, Shelley associates with one phase of his poetic theories the words of Jesus and his disciples, and also associates with the Christian and chivalric systems certain results that, he says, grew out of the operation of the poetic element in these systems.

Another influence has been considered by some critics to be very important in Shelley's thinking--that of Plato. Among those taking this point of view are Mr. Floyd Stovall,<sup>1</sup> Mr. P. T. Harrison, Jr.,<sup>2</sup> Miss E. Wylie,<sup>3</sup> Mr. Gilbert Thomas,<sup>4</sup> and Mr. Llewelyn Powys.<sup>5</sup> One of the best and most complete discussions, however, of this point is found in Miss Lillian Winstanley's "Platonism in Shelley,"<sup>6</sup> where she asserts that Shelley disliked the Hebraic ideal, his religious system being Greek and Platonic rather than Christian and Biblical. She says

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<sup>1</sup>"Shelley's Doctrine of Love," PMLA, vol. 45, pp. 283-303.  
<sup>2</sup>"Spenser and Shelley's Adonais," Studies in English, Number 13, The University of Texas Bulletin, No. 3526, July 8, 1933.  
<sup>3</sup>"Mr. Shelley Speaking," Bookman, vol. 65 (March, 1927), pp. 29-33.  
<sup>4</sup>"Divine Poet," Fortnightly, vol. 118 (June, 1922), p. 77.  
<sup>5</sup>Century, vol. 104 (June, 1922), pp. 459-462.  
<sup>6</sup>Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, vol. 4, pp. 72-100.



little concerning Shelley's critical theories specifically, although some of her remarks are applicable to them. Of all the writers mentioned, Plato would appear to have the greatest influence on Shelley's aesthetic ideas. Since this dissertation, however, is a background study and not an investigation of sources for Shelley's critical opinions, any suggestion of indebtedness to Plato will merely be mentioned in footnotes and not considered in the body of the thesis.

The influence of his own times upon Shelley has been considered, especially as it is connected with a distinguishing feature of his criticism, his fusion of aesthetic and ethical ideas, his looking upon poetry as an artistic agent for the ameliorating of human misery. A relationship has also been suggested between his personal sorrows and disappointments and his turning to poetry as a revitalizing force, also as a means of escape. The influence of Romanticism in the air, one might say, has been associated with many of his poetic theories. The possible connection between his reading of the Bible and these same theories has been viewed. Plato as a source for many of his ideas has been mentioned. One thing cannot be forgotten in any examination of his opinions, and that is his looking upon poetry as an active agent of reform, as a regenerating force, operating in its own artistic manner. To him it is the embodiment of idealized beauty, but never valued for the beauty alone. This theory emerges as one of the dominant ideas in his criticism, especially as it is expressed in the Defence, a consideration of which will be made in the next chapter.

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## Chapter II

### SHELLEY'S DEFENCE OF POETRY

In any consideration of Shelley as a literary critic one's mind turns, first of all, to that work of his which, though small in bulk, is of paramount interest. It is in the Defence of Poetry that one finds the main body of his critical principles; it is here, moreover, that one comes close to the real Shelley as he talks about that which lies nearest his heart and gives his reasons for the faith that is in him. It is easy also to understand that this Defence was written by the supreme lyricist of England, for in many places the poet in Shelley overpowers the critic: here the language becomes that of a prose-poem as he expresses his love for those qualities that, to him, make up the essential nature of an art both glorious and abiding.

This chapter will be concerned with a study of Shelley's Defence, the primary purpose being not only to reveal his ideas but to show them against a background of those expressed by other critics. This background will include as its major items opinions found in the critical works of the Renaissance apologists for poetry, Boccaccio and Sidney, as well as in those of the Neo-Classicalists, Boileau and Pope. The study is essentially one of background and not of sources.

It is true that the Defence is concerned, to a great extent, with aesthetic problems, with questions of an abstract nature. Mr.

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Saintsbury, who feels that the consideration of such questions is worth little in the work of a critic, remarks that Shelley drifts "'away, afar' from what apparently was his starting-point, over a measureless ocean of abstract thinking."<sup>1</sup> Criticism means for Mr. Saintsbury—and rightfully, too--the direct perception of a work of art, the appreciation of its fine qualities, and the weighing of them by one who is competent to judge of their values. Yet, in the very act of judging, and surely in the application of the comparative method of criticism, which the author mentioned above recommends so highly in his admirable History of Criticism, there would appear to be a necessity of the critic's possessing, through his background of reading, education, and acquaintance with all literatures, a body of principles or some principle by which he could determine excellence in the particular piece of work before him. In fact, Mr. Saintsbury's definition of criticism inevitably suggests this idea: "Criticism is the endeavour to find, to know, to love, to recommend, not only the best, but all the good, that has been known and thought and written in the world."<sup>2</sup> When this critic and Matthew Arnold speak of a "good" and a "best," there is implied some standard of excellence.

It is with this standard of excellence that Shelley is concerned in the Defence; what he is trying to do is to find the good and the best in the field of poetry, to reveal those qualities which, for him, make a poem excellent or give it immortality.

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<sup>1</sup>Saintsbury, vol. III, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 611.



Hence, his concern with abstractions, so called. Furthermore, like the apologists before him, he wishes to repel the attacks that have been made on poetry, the strongest point in such a defence being, of necessity, the revelation of whatever grounds for admiration there may be in the subject attacked. There is ample precedent in the history of apologies for Shelley's abstractions.

The Defence as an apology for poetry is the heir of a long and illustrious line, a fact recognized by many. Miss Elizabeth Woodbridge, in speaking of Boccaccio's defense (found in his De Genealogia Deorum) , comments upon it as "one of the series which includes Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Horace, Lucretius and Quintilian and Longinus, Vida and Scaliger and Boileau and Lessing, Sidney and Milton and Burke and Shelley." <sup>1</sup> Mr. Saintsbury, too, acknowledges that the Defence is the descendant of some well-known literary forbears: "It is almost the only return of its time to that extremely abstract consideration of the matter which we found prevalent in the Renaissance..." <sup>2</sup> Commenting upon the Apology, the same critic also remarks: "These prologues of general defence of Poetry, against what we may call the Puritan-Platonic impeachments of it, were almost a regulation with the Italian critics." <sup>3</sup> Mr. Spingarn, after discussing the influence of Italian criticism on European letters, adds, "Shelley represents

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<sup>1</sup>"Boccaccio's Defence of Poetry," PMLA, vol. 13, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup>Op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>3</sup>Loci Critici, p. 92.





a similar culmination of the Italian tradition in England."

Since Shelley can be looked upon as a late representative of this family of Italian-Elizabethan apologists, a comparison of his ideas with those of his ancestors should prove of interest. For the purpose of such a comparison the defenses of poetry written by Boccaccio and Sidney have been selected, a choice which may seem at first glance somewhat arbitrary, but for which, nevertheless, there appears to be some reasonable basis. There is evidence that Shelley was familiar with the writings of Boccaccio, as may be shown by a letter to Leigh Hunt, in which Shelley says: "I have been lately reading this most divine writer [Boccaccio]. He is, in a high sense of the word, a poet, and his language has the rhythm and harmony of verse...How much do I  
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admire Boccaccio!" Although there is no evidence to show that Shelley read the De Genealogia, in which Boccaccio's defense occurs, yet the fact that this writer is an Italian Renaissance critic singled out by Shelley for special comment--one of those critics to whose apologies for poetry Shelley's Defence is considered by many an heir--should give to any relationship of ideas between the two some degree of interest. Such a study, lacking evidence of any direct influence, will necessarily be one of indicating likenesses and differences only.

The same thing can be said of any study of Sidney's Apology in connection with the Defence; there is no evidence to show any influence on Shelley of the earlier English critic. There is no

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<sup>1</sup>Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup>Rhys, p. 292.



evidence, furthermore, as there is in the case of Boccaccio, to show that Shelley was especially interested in the work of Sidney; the latter is not one of the English poets whose writings are discussed by Shelley in his treatment of specific authors, either in the Defence or elsewhere. Yet Sidney has been considered by some the best English representative for his time of the Italian-Elizabethan critics, and it has been suggested that Shelley's major critical work belongs in this line of descent. Moreover, as will be pointed out, there appears to be a close kinship between the ideas expressed in the Defence and those of the Apology. For these reasons the selection of Sidney's critical essay as part of the background against which to place a similar work of Shelley's seems both natural and reasonable.

In order, however, to view the Defence in the light of a still more comprehensive background, it appears advisable to consider with this essay the works of two other critics, who are separated from Shelley more by the characteristics of the literary age which they dominated than by the number of years intervening between them and the later writer. Boileau and Pope were outstanding representatives of classicism in France and England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Any relationship of critical ideas, whether of contrast or comparison--and both will be found--between the Romantic critic and those of the Neo-Classical era should prove of interest.



It is thus, then, that Shelley's Defence will be examined: the ideas advanced in it will be discussed as important parts of Shelley's critical theories, and these ideas shown against a background of those already expressed by two of the later writer's Italian-Elizabethan forbears, as well as by two famous critics who dominated an age of literature essentially different from that to which Shelley belonged.

Each of the three apologies was written in answer to a specifically expressed or generally felt distrust of literature (poetry in particular) apparent during the age in which the author lived. The distrust of literature during mediaeval times is well known, as is also the suspicion entertained by the Church of anything tainted with pagan culture, an attitude illustrated in the Confessions of St. Augustine, the appearance of which, Mr. Saintsbury says, shows "the Puritan attitude to literature, in its earliest and perhaps also its greatest exponent." To such an attitude as well as to other philosophic objections to poetry Boccaccio makes his reply, which is found in Books XIV and XV of his De Genealogia Deorum, the prologue to Book XIV stating his purpose clearly: "Here begins the Fourteenth Book of the Genealogy of the Gentile Gods; wherein the Author, in Reply to their Objections, inveighs against the Enemies of the Name of Poetry." Mr. Spingarn's comment on these books of the De Genealogia is pertinent: they "have been called 'the first defence of poesy in honor of his own art by

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<sup>1</sup>Saintsbury, vol. I, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup>G. G., p. 14.





a poet in the modern world;' but Boccaccio's justification of imaginative literature is still primarily based on the usual mediaeval grounds.<sup>1</sup>

Like Boccaccio, Sidney wrote his Apology in answer to an attack on poetry, although he, unlike Boccaccio, never refers directly to what had undoubtedly precipitated his reply. His work is polemic in tone, although not so strong in its language as the older apology. In addition, it is in accord with the trend of the time in which it appeared, an age that produced such works as Lodge's Defence of Poetry, Musick, and Stage Plays; Webbe's Discourse of English Poesie; Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie; and Sir John Harington's Apologie of Poetrie, the latter following Sidney's essay and showing much indebtedness to it. The influence of Italian criticism was very strong during those Elizabethan days; Mr. Spingarn calls Sidney's Apology "a veritable epitome of the literary criticism of the Italian Renaissance."<sup>2</sup> This criticism, in many instances, had been leveled at the calumniators of poetry. Such a person Stephen Gosson must have appeared to his age, especially in his famous School of Abuse, which expressed one of the "Puritan" attacks on poetry. And it was against this vituperative onslaught (rashly dedicated by Gosson to Sidney), that Sidney undoubtedly directed his Apology, although he never makes specific mention of either Gosson or his work.

Shelley's Defence, also, appeared at a time when there was a distrust of poetry, particularly of the new Romantic type. The at-

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<sup>1</sup>Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 268.



titude of some of the leading periodicals of the day could hardly be called sympathetic: Jeffrey, of the Edinburgh Review, applying traditional standards to this new and startling form of verse, found occasion to condemn it unreservedly; William Gifford, of the Quarterly Review, showed himself a conspicuous enemy of the Romantics-- "Before the end of his editorship he had committed sins of blind rancour against the new poetry and the new prose which modern criticism justly finds unpardonable"<sup>1</sup>--John Gibson Lockhart, of Blackwoods, did much to make that magazine a success through the scathing criticisms that he wrote of contemporary poetry; his treatment of Keats and Leigh Hunt is well known.

That Shelley was concerned over some of these reviews, Mr.

Dowden shows in his biography of the poet:

About this time (November 11, 1820) Shelley began a letter to the editor of the Quarterly Review...in which he pleads against the cruel judgment pronounced against 'Endymion,' while admitting the 'false taste' with which the poem is 'replenished;' appeals to Gifford's humanity by informing him of the sufferings and injury which, as he believed, the Quarterly article had inflicted on Keats; and demands a revision of the sentence of condemnation on the ground of the extraordinary strength and beauty of the fragment 'Hyperion' in the recently published volume. <sup>2</sup>

A Defence of Poetry was written during February and March of the year 1821,<sup>3</sup> only a few months after this letter of Shelley's in behalf of Keats. Concern over the treatment of one poet may have aroused in Shelley's mind concern over the treatment of poetry in general. Furthermore, anything that could be said of the excellencies of poetry in general might prove some method of defense against the rough usage

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<sup>1</sup>Herford, C. H., The Age of Wordsworth, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Dowden, p. 490.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 478.



contemporary poetry was receiving at the hands of many critics.

One of these critics was Peacock in his Four Ages of Poetry, a work which, in its attack on the new verse, precipitated Shelley's Defence. As Mr. Herford remarks, "In the idealisms of his time Peacock saw only mystification and blue devils, grotesquely discordant with the 'cheerful and solid wisdom of antiquity.' In the Romantic revival itself he saw only the decrepit senilities of the 'Brazen age' of Poetry."<sup>1</sup> Shelley himself says, in a letter to Peacock (March 21, 1821), "I dispatch by this post the first part of an essay intended to consist of three parts, which I design for an antidote to your Four Ages of Poetry."<sup>2</sup> This essay proved to be, as Mr. Herford says, "a noble statement not only of Shelley's own poetic ideals, but (despite some ambiguity of expression) of what is most poetic in poetry at large."<sup>3</sup>

All three of these apologies under consideration were thus motivated by the authors' desire to defend poetry against its detractors. The arguments in all three, moreover, as will be shown, are based largely upon ethical and moral grounds; perhaps the apologists were applying the principle of fighting fire with fire. Yet there is some difference in the road that they take to their destination: Boccaccio is trying to show that there is nothing harmful in the reading of poetry by a good Catholic of his time; Sidney, to pacify the Puritans of his day, who, alarmed by the conditions of the stage, wished to put all poetry under the ban. Shelley does not have to face quite such a Puritan onslaught, although it may have

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<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Shawcross, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup>Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. XII, p. 83.





appeared to some that the devil himself was speaking through the lips of the Romantics. The Defence is also not so direct and specific in its reply as its predecessors are, especially the work of Boccaccio, who makes use of unrestrained and biting epithets to describe the enemies of poetry. Sidney's Apology shows epithets employed for a similar purpose, but they are much less vituperative than those found in the Italian's defense. An absence of such extreme language will be noticed in Shelley's Defence, in which Shelley is more concerned with the extolling of poetry than the reviling of its enemies. There is evidence in the work itself that the author intended it to be rather general in its reply; he says near the end: "The first part of these remarks has related to poetry in its elements and principles..."<sup>1</sup> In the next paragraph he speaks of a proposed extension of the essay:

The second part will have for its object an application of these principles to the present state of the cultivation of poetry, and a defence of the attempt to idealize the modern forms of manners and opinions, and compel them into a subordination to the imaginative and creative faculty. 2

This projected second part was never written.

Shelley's essay, in juxtaposition with the critical works of Boileau and Pope, reveals some degree of similarity in nature and method. The earlier writers, too, deal to quite an extent with the elements and principles of poetry, especially the type of poetry written under the aegis of the classical school. L'Art Poétique

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 37, ll. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 37-38, ll. 33-1.

Shelley's stress here on the "idealizing" of something is in harmony with one of the outstanding characteristics of his nature.



does more, for, in addition to characterizing poetry in general, Boileau treats the different types, like Shelley delving into history, but for a different purpose, the former being interested in tracing the growth of various forms of verse, the latter intent upon finding in history confirmation of his idea that poetry has had a beneficent effect upon society. M. A. Ch. Gidel, editor of Oeuvres Complètes de Boileau, in a footnote quotes a passage from Dussault (Ann. litt., 1818, I, 276.) commenting upon the work of Boileau:

Dans les quatre chants d'un poème très-court, le législateur du Parnasse français a embrassé toutes les parties de la littérature: non-seulement il a exposé tous les principes de l'art d'écrire, mais il a défini tous les genres, crayonné l'historique de quelques-uns, caractérisé un assez grand nombre de poètes anciens et modernes, esquissé le tableau des révolutions du goût depuis François I<sup>er</sup> jusqu'à Louis XIV, et tracé aux auteurs des règles de conduite. 1

The general nature of An Essay on Criticism has been recognized.

In his "Bibliographical Sketch" prefacing the Cambridge Edition of The Complete Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, the editor remarks:

If The Rape of the Lock was Pope's masterpiece in the field of impersonal satire, the Essay on Criticism, which belongs to the same period of the poet's life, was his masterpiece in the realm of poetic generalization...The present editor is inclined to think that justice has never been done to this extraordinary work, either as a product of precocity, or in its own right. It is, in his opinion, not only a manual of criticism, to which the practitioner may apply for sound guidance upon almost any given point, but an exhaustive satire upon false methods of criticism...It does not, as has been alleged, constitute a mere helter-skelter summary of critical platitudes; there is hardly a predicament in modern criticism from which it does not suggest an adequate means of extrication. 2

Of two important differences that may be noted at the outset between Shelley's critical work and those of his Neo-Classical prede-

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<sup>1</sup>Boileau, pp. 281-282.

<sup>2</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. XV.



cessors, one is the absence of satire in the Defence. The reason for this difference might be found in the characteristics of an age that stressed feeling more than reason, also in the nature and temperament of Shelley himself, which, to be sure, was moulded to some extent by the era in which he lived and wrote. Furthermore, the fact that Pope's master in criticism (the relationship between him and Boileau is well known) saw fit to make use of satire in the expression of his critical opinions may have had great influence on the younger man.

Another difference between the Defence and the critical efforts of Boileau and Pope is that the former is, as its title implies, a defense of poetry, whereas L'Art Poétique and An Essay on Criticism are manuals of criticism rather than apologies. The position of Shelley was quite a contrast to that of the other two. He was comparatively unknown and unrecognized at the time he produced the Defence; moreover, he was associated with a school of poetry which was frequently the object of vicious attacks. Boileau's position was assured; he was indeed "the legislator on Parnassus." Pope was a young man when he wrote An Essay on Criticism and did not then exercise all the influence which was later to be his. But, like Boileau, he was an exponent of poetic theories that did not run counter to the currents of his time. Probably neither of the earlier critics felt that the art which he represented was in any need of an apology.





In his Defence Shelley, as has been shown, is replying to an attack on the new poetry; he is also interested in defending all poetry. But he does even more than this, for, as Mr. Herford has pointed out in his discussion of Shelley in The Cambridge History of English Literature,

Not poetry alone, as ordinarily understood, but ethics, the very meaning of conduct, of history, nay, of life itself, was, for Shelley, at stake; and his Defence ranges far beyond the scope of mere literature. <sup>1</sup>

One of the most important ideas in the Defence is, as will be shown, Shelley's tying up poetry with conduct in his endeavor to prove that this art is moral in its effects. In pointing out this relation between poetry and human affairs, he postulates a definition of poetry far wider than the meaning ordinarily given the term. All of this is inseparably joined with his idea of the imagination and the way in which it operates after it has been affected by that which contains the poetic element, his conception of the imagination representing a combination of the Romantic point of view with his own ideas on the subject. This expression of opinion is one of the most striking and original parts of the Defence.

Turning now to a detailed consideration of the Defence, one notices that there are five major lines of thought developed by Shelley. These might be expressed in the form of questions, to which Shelley gives his answers, the queries being: what is poetry and who are the poets? what are the effects of poetry upon society? what evidence from history may be adduced to show that poetry does produce these effects? how may the charges brought against poetry by the utilitarians be answered? what, in the final analy-

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<sup>1</sup>Vol. XII, p. 83.



sis, may be said concerning the poets and poetry, the nature of the artists themselves and the value of their productions? Shelley's answers to these questions will now be considered, the significant parts of his replies being compared or contrasted, as the case may be, with the ideas of the other critics whose works are being examined in this chapter.

At the beginning of the Defence, in answer to the first question, Shelley plunges immediately into a matter that is vital to his whole conception of poetry, the function of the imagination, especially as it is compared with that of the reason. It will be noted that what Shelley has in mind here is the Romantic, transcendental idea of the imagination, the poetic and idealized conception of it. Reason, he says, based on the principles of analysis, enumerates qualities already known and pays attention to differences; imagination, based on synthesis, perceives the value of qualities both separately and as a whole, also pays attention to likenesses. "Reason is to the imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance."<sup>1</sup>

"Poetry," Shelley continues, "in a general sense may be defined to be 'the expression of the imagination;' and poetry is connate with the origin of man."<sup>2</sup> Man responds like an Aeolian lyre to external and internal impressions. These impressions produce not only melody, but harmony, "by an internal adjustment of the sounds and motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them"<sup>3</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 1, ll. 21-23.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-2, ll. 24-1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 2, ll. 8-10.



principle is illustrated by a child at play, also by the savage (to the ages, a child), both of whom express emotions produced in them by surrounding objects, the result being, in the case of the savage, "language and gesture, together with plastic or pictorial imitation..."<sup>1</sup> Primitive man also responds to another man with whom he is brought into contact, the result being another class of emotions together with additional modes of expression; "and language, gesture, and the imitative arts become at once the representation and the medium, the pencil and the picture, the chisel and the statue, the chord and the harmony."<sup>2</sup> From this contact between two human beings there develop those sympathies which are the elements of society.

Those men who, in the infancy of society, thus imitate, or represent, natural objects observe a certain rhythm in their activities, this rhythm or order being that which is peculiar to each class of representation, and that which gives a delight greater than the pleasure yielded by any other order; "the sense of an approximation to this order has been called taste by modern writers."<sup>3</sup> This faculty of approximation to the beautiful, or, as Shelley explains it, "the relation to the highest pleasure and its cause," exists to excess in the poets, who communicate a pleasure to others by the way in which they express the influences operating upon them. "Their language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension..."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 27-28.  
This is one of the appearances--rare in Shelley--of the Aristotelian idea of mimesis.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 2, ll. 33-37.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 3, ll. 30-31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 4, ll. 8-11.





When, in the course of time, the words which express these relations become merely symbols for classes of thought instead of the original vital metaphors, language becomes dead, and new poets are<sup>1</sup> needed to create the associations in their pristine freshness, the expressions of these similitudes or relations being distinctly the work of a poet. "In the infancy of society," however, "every<sup>2</sup> author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry; and to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression. Every original language near to its source is in<sup>3</sup> itself the chaos of a cyclic poem."

The first paragraph of this essay introduces one immediately to that which is at the root of Shelley's justification of poetry, namely, the imagination. Shelley is thus laying the foundation for his discussion of the peculiar way in which, according to his conception of it, the imagination operates to produce the moral effect of poetry. This is a beginning quite different from that of either Boccaccio or Sidney. The former commences immediately his arraignment of the enemies of poetry, saying that he is going to "oppugn with timely reply" those who rise up against his work, "yelping like dogs," with their "cant objections," which he can "readily<sup>4</sup> forecast." In the Apology Sidney makes use of a concrete begin-

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<sup>1</sup>One might draw an analogy between the situation described here and that existing near the close of the eighteenth century in England, when a new class of poets sprang up who endeavored to create fresh associations. Shelley may have been thinking of this.

<sup>2</sup>This view, according to Mr. Saintsbury (see A History of Criticism, vol. II, p. 52), is similar to that of Minturno.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 4, ll. 21-28.

<sup>4</sup>G. G. 14. 1, 17.



ning, telling an anecdote which leads up to his central idea, the necessity of defending poetry. Boileau opens L'Art Poétique with a few words of warning to un téméraire auteur who seeks to climb Parnassus when he is not naturally gifted as a writer; he then addresses those who aspire to be poets but who lack the qualifications necessary for this work. Pope begins An Essay on Criticism with a discussion of the importance of judging well, and then proceeds to a consideration of the importance of true taste.

In the first mention that he makes of the nature of poetry Boccaccio does not, like Shelley, distinguish between the imagination and the reason. He does, however, define poetry as "a sort of fervid and exquisite invention, with fervid expression, in speech<sup>1</sup> or writing, of that which the mind has invented." He also says that poetry, like philosophy, "proceeds from the bosom of God;" the fervor of which it is possessed "is sublime in its effects; it impels the soul to a longing for utterance; it brings forth strange and unheard-of creations of the mind."<sup>2</sup> Although his interpretation of the word "invention" is probably the same as that of other mediaevalists, yet his mention of the concepts of poetry as "strange and unheard-of creations" brings him rather close to Shelley's idea of poetry as an "expression of the imagination," and thus to the Romantic use of this important word.

In his initial definition of poetry Sidney admittedly makes use of the Aristotelian idea of art, saying: "Poesie therefore is

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 7, 39.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



an arte of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word Mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfetting, or figuring foorth..."<sup>1</sup> This is different from Shelley's initial definition largely because of the emphasis laid by the later critic on the word "imagination," yet Shelley in his discussion of the beginnings of poetry follows the Aristotelian concept of there being a peculiar order appropriate to each class of representation. Pope does not specifically define poetry; his work is, after all, a critical essay dealing with the principles of correct judgment, and not, like Shelley's, a defense of verse. Although Boileau gives no definition of poetry in general, he defines the different types popular in his day, also prefaces his description of these types with the remark: Tout poème est brillant de sa propre beauté.<sup>2</sup>

Something should be said at this point concerning a difference between L'Art Poétique and the Defence as far as content is concerned. Boileau deals specifically with various types of poetry and is much interested in tracing their growth. The second chant is given over to discussions of the pastoral, the elegy, the ode, the sonnet, the madrigal, satiric verse, and the vaudeville. Passing mention is made of the rondeau and the ballade. In the third chant Boileau discusses the drama at length, considering tragedy and comedy separately; also, epic poetry and the fable. Shelley also discusses the drama at length, but pays no attention to the

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<sup>1</sup>Apology, p. 158, ll. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 325.





other types considered by Boileau. One reason may be the fact that in Shelley's day many of the forms of verse so popular and so much insisted upon a century before were not quite so prevalent; there may have been a faint foreshadowing here of the modern tendency toward the breaking down of minute classifications of poetry. Also, English poetry did not employ such various genres as did the French. Another reason, and the more probable one, is that Shelley is dealing, as will be shown later, with poetry in both its broader and more restricted sense, and thus concerns himself with that which seems essentially poetic, regardless of its form.

As to the beginnings of poetry, Boccaccio decides that the honor of inventing it belongs to the Hebrews rather than to the Greeks or Babylonians; poetry was "instilled into most sacred prophets, dedicated to God."<sup>1</sup> The Gentile poets, he says, followed in the steps of the prophets, "but whereas the holy men were filled with the Holy Ghost, and wrote under His impulse, the others were prompted by mere energy of mind, whence such a one is called 'seer.'<sup>2</sup>" Boccaccio here accepts the idea that poetry grew out of the religious instinct of man--a point which is important in all his argument and one which, as will be seen later on in the Defence, bears some resemblance to Shelley's thought of the connection between the ability granted to some of apprehending the beautiful and the good, and religion.

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 8, 46.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



Sidney makes a plea for the antiquity of poetry, saying that this art preceded knowledge and opened the way for it; that the philosophers of early Greece appeared in the guise of poets, this noticeable to a great extent in the works of Plato ("the<sup>1</sup> skinne as it were and beautie depended most of Poetrie..."); that the historians even have been glad to borrow from the poets;<sup>2</sup> that poetry thus gave to both philosophy and history "a great pasport...into the gates of populer iudgements"<sup>3</sup> and that no primitive nation has ever been without its poets.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, he continues, the etymology of the word shows the divine nature of poetry:<sup>5</sup> among the Romans a poet was called Vates—meaning a divine, a foreseer, or prophet, and reasonably, too, for David's psalms are in reality a divine poem. It is not sacrilege to say this, he asserts, because those who with quiet judgment look deeply into poetry see that it does not deserve "to be scourged out of the Church of God."<sup>6</sup> Among the Greeks, he continues, the poet was called a "maker," from the verb Poiein, meaning "to Make,"<sup>7</sup> as he is also among the English—a high and incomparable title.

Boileau, discussing the origin of verse, says that man before

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<sup>1</sup>Apology, p. 152, ll. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 153, ll. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 11-12.

<sup>4</sup>Mr. Spingarn says (in Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, p. 269): "In all that relates to the antiquity, universality, and preeminence of poetry, Sidney apparently follows Minturno."

<sup>5</sup>Apology, p. 154, l. 5.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 155, l. 19.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., ll. 21-27.



the development of reason lived in a lawless and violent state, but that the harmonious sound of words changed these conditions.

He describes this process:

Mais du discours enfin l'harmonieuse adresse  
De ces sauvages moeurs adoucit la rudesse,  
Rassembla les humains dans les forêts épars,  
Enferma les cités de murs et de ramparts,  
De l'aspect du supplice effraya l'insolence,  
Et sous l'appui des lois mit la foible innocence.  
Cet ordre fut, dit-on, le fruit des premiers vers.  
De là sont nés ces bruits reçus dans l'universe,  
Qu'aux accents dont Orphée emplît les monts de Thrace,  
Les tigres amollis dépouilloient leur audace;  
Qu'aux accords d'Amphion les pierres se mouvoient,  
Et sur les murs thébains en ordre s'élevoient.  
L'harmonie en naissant produisit ces miracles.  
Depuis, le ciel en vers fit parler les oracles;  
Du sein d'un prêtre ému d'une divine horreur,  
Apollon par des vers exhala sa fureur. 1

It is interesting to note that in this passage, similar in thought to the ideas expressed by Horace on the same subject, Boileau closely associates with the origin of verse the influence of the heavens on the oracles, which were spoken by a priest moved by a divine frenzy. Thus, he, too, connects religion with the source of the early poetry. He is different from Pope in this respect, who says nothing in An Essay on Criticism concerning the origin of verse; he is chiefly concerned here with enunciating the critical principles of an art grown to maturity.

It would appear, from Shelley's definition of the word, that he is considering taste from the point of view of those qualities in a work of art that make it pleasing; he remarks that taste has been called "the sense of an approximation" to the rhythm or order peculiar

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<sup>1</sup>L'Art Poétique, pp. 392-393.





to each class of representation. Neither Boccaccio nor Sidney makes specific mention of this word "taste" in his discussions, nor does Boileau define it specifically. He is, however, concerned with the denotations of the word when he makes clear his idea of the qualities in a poem which will render it pleasing to the palate of the critic and when he considers the power of discernment of the critic himself, both of which matters will be discussed later. Pope makes specific mention of the word "taste" in his well-known couplet:

In Poets as true Genius is but rare  
True Taste as seldom is the Critic's share; <sup>1</sup>

Here he is applying the word in the second meaning suggested above.

That quality in a poem which will make it pleasing to Shelley, he has already asserted boldly in his initial definition: poetry "is an expression of the imagination." It will be seen throughout the Defence that this word connotes much more for him than the early idea of imitation, the making of something out of elements already known or perceived or recollected. The creative, transcendental imagination is what interests him. In the first paragraph of the Defence he calls imagination the spirit, the substance, whereas reason is merely the body, the shadow; he also says that reason is to the imagination as the instrument to the agent, or as the means of doing to that which does, the passage might be interpreted. Thus he does not disregard or neglect reason, but identifies it with the means. He does, however, subordinate it to the imagination, and in this respect is in sharp contrast to the Neo-Classicists.

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<sup>1</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 67, ll. 11-12.



Where Shelley stresses the imagination they stress the reason; it is the work of art displaying prominently this quality that they prefer. Boileau, in the following passage, subordinates everything else to it:

Aimez donc la raison: que toujours vos écrits  
Empruntent d'elle seule et leur lustre et leur prix. 1

In his discussion of the drama he indicates clearly his preference:

J'aime sur le théâtre un agreable auteur  
Qui, sans se diffamer aux yeux du spectateur,  
Plaît par le raison seule, et jamais la choque. 2

In another passage he shows again his conception of the importance of reason:

Il est certains esprits dont les sombres pensées  
Sont d'un nuage épais toujours embarrassées;  
Le jour de la raison ne le sauroit percer.  
Avant donc que d'écrire apprenez à penser.  
Selon que notre idée est plus ou moins obscure,  
L'expression la suit, ou moins nette, ou plus pure. 3

He also links reason with "good sense"; a piece of writing produced in accordance with the dictates of reason will be characterized by good sense, is his belief. He says, in his opening chant:

Quelque sujet qu'on traite, ou plaisant, ou sublime,  
Que toujours le bons sens s'accorde avec la rime:  
L'un l'autre vainement ils semblent se haïr;  
La rime est une esclave, et ne doit qu'obéir.  
Lorsqu'à la bien chercher d'abord on s'évertue,  
<sup>L'esprit y trouve aisément s'habitue</sup>  
Au joug de la raison sans peine elle fléchit.  
Et, loin de la gêner, la sert et l'enrichit.  
Mais lorsqu'on la néglige, elle devient rebelle,  
Et pour la rattraper le sens court après elle. 4

Also:

Tout doit tendre au bon sens: mais, pour y parvenir,  
Le chemin est glissant et pénible à tenir;

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<sup>1</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 378.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 286-287.



Pour peu qu'on s'en écarte, aussitôt on se noie.  
La raison pour marcher n'a souvent qu'une voie. 1

What Pope has to say concerning reason and good sense is often tied up with his remarks on Wit, the false form of which is not characterized by reason. This form he denounces, especially when it expresses itself in the shape of "conceits." In a letter to Wycherley (December 26, 1709) he gives his idea of what constitutes the type of Wit compatible with reason: "True Wit, I believe, may be defined as a justness of thought, and a facility of expression." In An Essay on Criticism he says:

But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despised,  
And kept unconquer'd and uncivilized;  
(Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,  
We still defied the Romans, as of old.)  
Yet some there were, among the sounder few  
Of those who less presumed and better knew,  
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,  
And here restor'd Wit's fundamental laws. 2

Also:

Pride, where Wit fails, steps in to our defence,  
And fills up all the mighty void of Sense:  
If once right Reason drives that cloud away,  
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day. 3

He believes that True Wit should be the companion of sound Judgment, saying:

For Wit and Judgment often are at strife,  
Tho' meant each other's aid, like man and wife.  
'Tis more to guide than spur the Muse's steed,  
Restrain his fury than provoke his speed; 4

He begs the immortal poets of ages past

To teach vain Wits a science little known,  
T'admire superior sense, and doubt their own. 5

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>2</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 77, ll. 156-165.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 70, ll. 9-12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 68, ll. 82-85.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 69, ll. 199-200.





Those who vainly pursue a false wit, Pope depicts:

Some are bewilder'd in the maze of schools,  
And some made coxcombs Nature meant but fools:  
In search of wit these lose their common sense,  
And turn critics in their own defence: 1

In another place he speaks of the necessity of curbing "proud man's<sup>2</sup> pretending wit," and praises "The solid power of Understanding."<sup>3</sup>

The first four lines of An Essay on Criticism show by implication his idea of the necessity of sound judgment and reason on the part of the critic:

'Tis hard to say if greater want of skill  
Appear in writing or in judging ill;  
But of the two less dangerous is th' offence  
To tire our patience than mislead our sense.

Thus both Boileau and Pope emphasize strongly reason, good sense, sound judgment, whereas Shelley, as has been shown and will be demonstrated more fully later, although accepting reason as the means or instrument, puts his primary stress on the imagination, giving to this word the meaning which it has had since the time of Coleridge.

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After relating poetry to<sup>1</sup> imagination and discussing the origin of verse, Shelley comes to one of the distinguishing features of the Defence, the broad view he takes of both the poets and poetry. Not only are the poets, to him, the authors of language and the other arts; "they are the institutors of laws and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 67, ll. 6-9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 68, l. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., l. 57.



that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world<sup>1</sup> which is called religion." Boccaccio, too, expresses his belief that poetry grew out of the religious instinct of man; the early poet was one who possessed the faculty of approximation to the good--an idea inherent in the Italian critic's discussion of the pagan poets of mythology as theologians. It is true, he says, that certain pietists may feel that he is sacrilegious in asserting that these pagan poets were theologians, but those who make this<sup>2</sup> accusation show the "narrow limitations of their reading." He refers to Augustine's citing Varro, who held that theology had three divisions--mythical, physical, and civil; "physical theology is found in the great poets since they clothe many a physical and<sup>3</sup> moral truth in their inventions..." Moreover, "Aristotle himself<sup>4</sup> avers that they were the first to ponder theology..." Just as "sacred theologians turn physical when occasion demands, so "the old theology can sometimes be employed in the service of Catholic<sup>5</sup> truth..." More than one orthodox poet has clothed sacred teach-

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, pp. 4-5, ll. 35-5.

Mr. Spingarn states (see A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, pp. 11-12) that the idea of the poet as a civilizing factor runs through Renaissance criticism. But Shelley's conception, although apparently similar, has points of difference. Shelley is employing the word "poet" in an exceedingly broad sense, using it to describe those who are not ordinarily given this title, but who, according to Shelley's application of the word, possess in a high degree the faculty of approximation to the beautiful and the good.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 15. 8, 121.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>G. G. 15. 8, 123.



ings in the "investiture of fiction." Sidney also, as has been pointed out, attempts to show the divine nature of early poetry; yet neither he nor Boccaccio has in mind the same broad conception of poetry as that held by Shelley, both of them using the term "poet" in what Shelley calls its "more restricted" sense. The same is true of Boileau and Pope: both of these critics give to the word "poet" its usual meaning. Boileau's ideas, however, as has been suggested, show a similarity in one respect to those expressed in this passage of the Defence; that is, he, like Shelley, associates with religion the origin of verse.

Continuing his discussion of this point, Shelley says that all original religions (he has before spoken of religion as the "partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world") are allegorical or susceptible of allegory.<sup>2</sup> During the early epochs of the world the poet was looked upon both as a prophet and a legislator;<sup>3</sup> he unites both these characters, Shelley says, for he beholds the present intensely; he beholds the future in the present; he "participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as re-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Both Petrarch and Boccaccio, according to Mr. Spingarn (cf. op. cit., p. 8), modified the mediaeval point of view--that poetry is a popular form of theology--"by arguing conversely that theology itself is a form of poetry,--the poetry of God." Sidney says that the chief poets have always been those who "imitated the inconceivable excellencies of GOD." (Apology, p. 158, ll. 11-12.)

<sup>2</sup>The allegorical treatment of all literature was a commonplace in the Middle Ages, and is a method relied upon by Boccaccio in his De Genealogia Deorum; in his defense of poetry he emphasizes the fact that Christ employed parables.

<sup>3</sup>Mr. Spingarn states (see op. cit., p. 188) that this conception of the poet was widely prevalent during the Renaissance; that it was "derived from Horace, according to whom the poet was originally a law-giver, or divine prophet; and that this conception persists in modern literature from Poliziano to Shelley." It might be suggested, however, that Shelley does not derive this idea from Horace; the source, if source there must be, will probably be found in the works of Plato.





lates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not."<sup>1</sup>

This may be illustrated by the works of Aeschylus, Job, and Dante, as well as creations in the fine arts. Thus the materials of poetry, according to Shelley, are not only language and color and form, but "religious and civil habits of action," all of which "may be called poetry by that figure of speech which considers the effect as a synonym of the cause."<sup>2</sup>

The view of poetry expressed here sharply distinguishes Shelley's work from that of the other critics under consideration. As will be shown presently, Shelley discusses poetry in the ordinary meaning of the term also, but he reverts again and again in his Defence to what he believes is the wider scope of this art; whatever produces anything containing an element of the poetic is, for Shelley, poetry.

Poetry, in what he calls its "more restricted" sense, is Shelley's next consideration—"those arrangements of language, and especially metrical language, which are created by that imperial faculty, whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man."<sup>3</sup> The fame of the great masters of the other arts has never equaled that of the poets, Shelley says, this being due to the fact<sup>4</sup> that language is the most favorable medium in which an artist can

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<sup>1</sup> Defence, p. 5, ll. 21-23.

Boccaccio, as has been shown, looks upon the early poets—other than the "holy men"—as "seers." The same idea has been expressed by Sidney, who acknowledges the appropriateness of the name given to the poet by the Romans—a "Vates" or "diviner."

<sup>2</sup> Defence, p. 5, ll. 33-36.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6, ll. 37-3.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Saintsbury has pointed out (see A History of Criticism, vol. II, p. 52) a similar idea in Minturno, saying that this early critic believed "that poetry 'holds all the Arts in fee,' can draw upon them all."



work: it can represent actions and passions more directly than can other media; it is more flexible, more plastic, and more obedient to the control of the imagination.<sup>1</sup> The only fame that even appears to exceed that of the poets--in the more restricted sense--is the fame of legislators and founders of religion,"so long as their institutions last..."<sup>2</sup> Yet, when necessary deductions are made, it is doubtful, Shelley concludes, whether any excess will remain.

Boccaccio, too, feels that the poets achieve merited fame. He inveighs against a group of adversaries who disparage poetry, the lawyers of his day--a class that Boccaccio, himself a law-student at one time, knew well. These men compliment poetry, he says, because it is a pretty thing, but in reality consider the poet's work good for nothing because it yields no profit. Boccaccio, in reply, maintains that poetry can never be judged fairly by materialistic standards. He makes a plea on very high grounds not only for poetry, but for all humanistic learning as well, saying that "money-getting is not the function and end of the speculative sciences, but of the applied sciences and finance."<sup>3</sup> Poetry, he maintains, devotes herself to something

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. A.C. Bradley remarks (in Oxford Lectures on Poetry, p. 158) that Shelley forgets that other media have some points of superiority over language, and that language on its physical side (words) is no more a product of the imagination than the stone used by the sculptor or the colors used by the painter. Also, the professors of the other arts might dispute Shelley's statement that their medium was an "obstacle"; they might answer that it was only the qualities of their particular medium that enabled them to express their ideas at all; that what they express cannot be separated from its medium, their conceptions being from the beginning sculpturesque or pictorial; also that, even though their medium be an obstacle as well as a medium, this is likewise true of language.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 6, l. 25.

<sup>3</sup>G. G., 14. 4, 23.



greater than the mere acquiring of wealth; she dwells on high, drawing men toward the eternal and enduring; she gives a man everlasting fame. The poet, moreover, is not really poor, because the kind of poverty which he experiences, a mere lack of worldly goods, is "highly desirable as a bringer of tranquillity and infinite comforts," whereas the other kind, a mental disease that torments even the rich, is "the enemy of peace and quiet, and cruelly tortures the mind it possesses."<sup>1</sup>

Sidney, also, believes that the reputation of the poet is lofty, and in his idea of the supremacy of the poet's work reaches a position practically the same as Shelley's. He says that all the arts depend upon and are subjected to nature, but that the poet goes beyond all other artists; his work surpasses that of nature even: the skill of the artificer stands in the Idea of the work and not in the thing itself.<sup>2</sup> The world of nature is "brassen, the Poets only deliuer a golden."<sup>3</sup> It is the "diuine breath"<sup>4</sup> of his own Maker that enables the poet to do these excellent things. The poet's work, Sidney continues, is more valuable than that of the practicers of other arts. All sciences serve knowledge with the end not only of learning, but also of doing well;<sup>5</sup> the final end of learning is to draw men to the highest possible perfection. The astronomer looks to the stars for it,

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 28-29.

<sup>2</sup>Apology, p. 157, ll. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 156, l. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 157, l. 25.

<sup>5</sup>This view is similar to that of Aristotle, as expressed in the Poetics.





but "might fall into a ditch..."<sup>1</sup> The natural philosopher tries to show the causes of things, but "might be blinde in himself..."<sup>2</sup> The mathematician "might draw foorth a straight line with a crooked hart..."<sup>3</sup> Sidney is here placing the "practicers of other arts" below the poets on the ground that their work is inferior in practical moral value, a value which, Shelley strongly maintains, is possessed by poetry.

Not only are the poets superior to these men already mentioned, Sidney says; their achievements are also greater than those of the historian and the philosopher. He refers to Aristotle, who said that poetry was more universal and serious than history.<sup>4</sup> One would rather, he continues, have a thing set down as it should be--the method of poetry--than as it was. Even though the historian does make use of specific examples, the poet is a more valuable guide because, not being bound by what actually was, he can make his example more reasonable than that of the historian, who may at times find fortune over-ruling his best wisdom, and also must relate events for which there is no cause, except a poetical one.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, a "fayned example," as Sidney calls it, has as much force to teach as a true one, and is superior to the other in that the poet can make an action his own by imitation, "beautifying it

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<sup>1</sup>Apology, p. 161, l. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., l. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup>Mr. Spingarn (op. cit., p. 273) is of the opinion that Sidney, although deeply indebted to Aristotle for his view of the relative values of poetry and history, "goes farther than Aristotle probably would have gone..."

<sup>5</sup>Apology, pp. 168-169.





both for further teaching, and more delighting, as it pleaseth  
 him..."<sup>1</sup> Also, poetry, different from history, shows "vertue ex-  
 alted and vice punished."<sup>2</sup> Poetry is thus superior to history  
 because it not only gives knowledge, but, more important, incites  
 the mind to the good. It is superior to philosophy also because,  
 although philosophy teaches, poetry moves, and this moving<sup>3</sup> is of  
 a higher degree than teaching." It is, in fact, Sidney asserts,  
 both the cause and the effect of teaching. Moreover, philosophy  
 teaches only the man who is willing to read it carefully, and such  
 a man has already gone halfway with the philosopher. The "free<sup>4</sup>  
 desire to doe well...is as good as a Philosopher's booke..."  
 Such a desire poetry awakens; thus it not only shows the way, but  
 entices men to enter it. Furthermore, unlike philosophy, poetry  
 does not begin with obscure definitions or weigh down the memory,<sup>5</sup>  
 but is of such a sort that it appeals, and teaches delightfully;  
 the poet is "the foode for the tenderest stomacks, the Poet is in-  
 deed the right Popular Philosopher..."<sup>6</sup> For all of these reasons,  
 Sidney concludes, the fame of the poet, especially as a guide to  
 the good life, will be higher than that of either of those com-  
 pared with him, and truly so, for the poet not only acts as a mod-  
 erator, but cōbines in his work the methods of both the historian

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 169, ll. 27-29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 170, l. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 171, l. 15.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 172, ll. 1-3.

<sup>5</sup>Mr. Spingarn remarks (*op. cit.*, p. 270) that this view of Sidney's is similar to that of Scaliger.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 167, ll. 8-9.



and the philosopher.

Sidney thus agrees with Shelley in the exalted conception he holds of the fame merited by the poet, even though there is some dissimilarity in the types with which the poet is compared in each defense. It will be seen, however, that Shelley, later on in the Defence, distinguishes between poetry and what he calls a "story of particular facts" in much the same way that Sidney distinguishes between poetry and history. Both the apologists, moreover, adduce moral grounds as their reason for ranking the poets so high.

Neither of the two Neo-Classical critics under consideration has as much to say concerning the fame of the poets as do the apologists--Boccaccio, Sidney, and Shelley. Boileau, however, believes that the art of writing is of such importance that those who attempt to practice it should be entirely sure that they are fitted for such a work. At the beginning of Chant IV of L'Art Poétique he tells the story of a physician formerly living in France who abused his calling and became a notorious assassin, detested and feared everywhere. The only friend left to him was a rich abbot, passionately fond of architecture. The physician became interested in this art and finally so attracted to it that he renounced his former profession and inhuman practices, becoming, instead, a good architect. His example, Boileau says, should be an excellent one for those who, without proper qualifications, are contemplating the business of writing. To people such as these



he addresses the following words of caution:

Soyez plutôt maçon, si c'est votre talent,  
Ouvrier estimé dans un art nécessaire,  
Qu'écrivain du commun et poète vulgaire. 1

He then gives his reason for this advice:

Il est dans tout autre art des degrés différents,  
On peut avec honneur remplir les seconds rangs;  
Mais dans l'art dangereux de rimer et d'écrire,  
Il n'est point de degrés du médiocre au pire.  
Qui dit froid écrivain dit détestable auteur. 2

Thus, for Boileau, there can be no second-rate in the field of writing; the art is important enough that one should become excellent in the practice of it or stay out of it altogether. If one does go into it, the goal, Boileau believes, should be the winning of honor and renown through laudable effort, and not primarily monetary gain, though a legitimate reward of this sort need not be denied a writer. The passage in which these opinions are expressed is worth quoting:

Travaillez pour la gloire, et qu'un sordide gain  
Ne soit jamais l'objet d'un illustre écrivain.  
Je sais qu'un noble esprit peut, sans honte et sans crime,  
Tirer de son travail un tribut légitime;  
Mais je ne puis souffrir ces auteurs renommés,  
Qui, dégoûtés de gloire et d'argent affamés,  
Mettent leur Apollon aux gages d'un libraire,  
Et font d'un art divin un métier mercenaire. 3

One of the most interesting ideas in these lines is Boileau's conception of writing as un art divin.

Although Pope's essay is intended primarily for the critic and considers literature from this point of view, yet the care

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<sup>1</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 381.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 391.





taken by the author in pointing out the causes that hinder a true judgment of writing and the qualities that are demanded in a worthy critic give evidence, by implication, of the value ascribed by Pope to that art with the proper estimation of which he is concerned. Further evidence is given in the lines where, after eulogizing the Muse who presided over the "ancient genius" of Rome and inspired the works of Virgil, Raphael, and Vida, Pope says:

Such was the Muse whose rules and practice tell  
'Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well.' <sup>1</sup>

In another line, after regretting the passing of the Golden Age in literature and lamenting the barren days that have succeeded, Pope shows his high regard for the fame of an author whose works are such as will confer immortality upon him: "Now length of fame (our second life) is lost..." <sup>2</sup> His idea of fame's bestowing upon the writer a "second life" is practically the same as that of the Romantic, Keats, who feels that the poets achieve a double immortality. Another more extended quotation might be given to show Pope's conception of the limitless realms of true art:

A little learning is a dangerous thing;  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:  
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
And drinking largely sobers us again.  
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,  
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,  
While from the bounded level of our mind  
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind:  
But more advanc'd, behold with strange surprise  
New distant scenes of endless science rise!

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<sup>1</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 77, ll. 164-165.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 73, l. 279.



So pleas'd at first the tow'ring Alps we try,  
 Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky;  
 Th' eternal snows appear already past,  
 And the first clouds and mountains seem the last:  
 But those attain'd, we tremble to survey  
 The growing labours of the lengthen'd way:  
 Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,  
 Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise! <sup>1</sup>

Mr. Saintsbury, in his History of Criticism, praises the Alps passage quoted here, but then remarks: "the famous doctrine of a little learning is an ingenious fallacy. It is not the little learning acquired, but the vast amount of ignorance left, that is dangerous." <sup>2</sup> Such a comment would appear to show a misinterpretation of these first two lines, or at least an interpretation that is too literal, for it is to ignorance masquerading as knowledge that Pope is referring here and that he connects with amateurs, so intoxicated with the first draught of knowing that they mistake the country within their limited vision for the whole realm of knowledge. He is expressing here the same thought found in L'Art Poétique: the scaling of Parnassus is no easy matter, and anyone attempting it must be prepared for the "growing labours," the "distant scenes," the <sup>3</sup> "lengthen'd way." The winning of fame in any art requires complete and thorough and competent preparation for every successive step, as well as a capacity for arduous labor. One might suggest that Pope is saying, as Boileau has said, that a person would do better to

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 70, ll. 15-32.      <sup>2</sup> Vol. II, p. 459.

It is well known that Pope admired Boileau and looked upon him as a master. M. Louis Cazamian (in A History of English Literature, p. 747) recognizes this fact when, in his discussion of An Essay on Criticism, he speaks of the examples that Pope had in mind while writing this work, and refers to "Boileau, whom he has constantly in mind..." (Many passages of similarity in the two essays substantiate this point of view; therefore it appears reasonable to interpret these particular lines of Pope's in the light of ideas already expressed by Boileau.



stay out of writing altogether if he does not want to keep on toward the loftiest summits or does not have the stamina that will allow him to reach the heights. Thus, although Pope and Boileau do not specifically compare the fame of the poet with that of others, both of them express the highest regard for writing as an art--and express their opinions in verse.

The next point that Shelley treats in the Defence is the much discussed question of the relationship between poetry and prose. He asserts that the division between these two kinds of writing is not philosophically accurate, that the real distinction is not between these forms, but between "measured and un-<sup>1</sup>measured language." The poets, he says, have chosen to express themselves in measured language, characterized by a uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, because they are aware that a connection exists between the perception of the order of relations between sounds and the perception of the order of relations between thoughts. For the reason that this connection is indis-<sup>2</sup>soluble, translation, he maintains, is futile. As far as metre is concerned, it is, for Shelley, "a certain system of traditional<sup>3</sup> forms of harmony and language." He believes that it is not essential in a poem as long as "the harmony, which is its spirit, be<sup>4</sup> observed." It is, however, popular, he admits, and to be preferred

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 6.

Objections have been made to this distinction formulated by Shelley, but it is entirely consistent with the broad view he takes of poetry.

<sup>2</sup>Shelley is here in entire accord with Dante.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 7, ll. 22-23.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., l. 26.

Here, as always, it is the inner harmony, the spirit, that Shelley stresses.





in compositions where there is much action.

The views of the other apologists on the origin and the necessity of metre are interesting. Boccaccio, using an argument which Mr. Osgood, his editor, points out is based on bad<sup>1</sup> etymology, says that poetry is indeed an art, for the word "poetry" is derived from an old Greek word poetes, translated into Latin as exquisita locutio; that men who first employed this exquisite style of speech "let it fall in measured periods"; also, to avoid monotony and to please their hearers, they "applied to it the standard of fixed rules, and restrained it within a definite number of feet and syllables," their words thus becoming "sonorous<sup>2</sup> to their hearers." Both Shelley and Boccaccio recognize the use of measured language, employed, according to Shelley, because of the early poets' instinctive recognition of the close connection existing between the order of relations of sounds and the order of relations of thoughts; according to Boccaccio, because of the pleasing quality it imparted to speech. Each of the two critics believes that metre is both convenient and popular, although Boccaccio has nothing to say on the question of its being necessary. Sidney, on the other hand, agrees with Shelley in the idea that metre is not necessary. He says that verse alone does not make a poet, that there are poets who have never used verse,

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<sup>1</sup>G. G., p. 158.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 14. 7, 40-41.





but that this form has been chosen by many poets as their "fit-<sup>1</sup>test rayment." What really makes a poet, though, he asserts, "is that fayning notable images of vertues, vices, or what els, with...<sup>2</sup>delightfull teaching..." Thus it is the appropriateness, and not the necessity, of metre that Sidney admits.

Neither one of the Neo-Classicists has anything specific to say concerning the origin of metre, unless one should except the passage already quoted from Boileau's work, where he speaks of the heavens' making the oracles express themselves in verse, out of the breath of a priest moved by a divine fury. Nor does either of these critics make any statement on the question of metre's being necessary; they seem to take it for granted, and both of them use a strongly accented line. As might be expected, however, from the concentration of his age on style, Boileau emphasizes strongly the matter of correct rhythm, or cadence. He says in this connection:

Ayez pour la cadence une oreille sévère:  
Que toujours dans vos vers le sens coupant les mots,  
Suspende l'hémistiche, en marque le repos.  
Gardez qu'une voyelle à courir trop hâtée  
Ne soit d'une voyelle en son chemin heurtée.  
Il est un heureux choix de mots harmonieux.  
Fuyez des mauvais sons le concours odieux:  
Le vers le mieux rempli, la plus noble pensée  
Ne peut plaire à l'esprit quand l'oreille est blessée. <sup>3</sup>

He shows the same stress on style in another passage:

Mon esprit n'admet point un pompeux barbarisme,  
Ni d'un vers ampoulé l'orgueilleux solécisme.

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<sup>1</sup>Apology, p. 160, l. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 13-15.

<sup>3</sup>L'Art Poétique, pp. 295-296.



Sans la langue, et un mot, l'auteur le plus divin  
Est toujours, quoi qu'il fasse, un méchant écrivain. 1

Pope, like Boileau, stresses the importance of a smooth-flowing line, yet he also satirizes those who pay attention to the rhythm and nothing else, those who

most by Numbers judge a poet's song,  
And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong.  
In the bright Muse tho' thousand charms conspire,  
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;  
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,  
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,  
Not for the doctrine, but for the music there. 2

In the next twelve or thirteen lines he continues this satire of those who write by rote, intent upon the expression of their ideas in the exact number of syllables considered correct, with little concern as to the meaning of what they write. It is interesting to find him satirizing the use by such writers of time-worn epithets and clichés, the same kind of diction that Wordsworth was to attack near the close of the century. Pope was evidently no more in sympathy with the abuse of poetic diction than was the Romantic; his theory is obviously much higher than the practice found among the writers of his time, whom he addresses thus:

Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know  
What's roundly smooth, or languishingly slow;  
And praise the easy vigour of a line  
Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.  
True ease in writing comes from Art, not Chance,  
As those move easiest, who have learned to dance.  
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence;  
The sound must seem an echo to the sense. 3

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 303-304.

<sup>2</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 71, ll. 137-143.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 72, ll. 158-165.



The most famous couplet in this passage--considered by some critics the best in the entire work--will be discussed later in connection with another point. It can easily be seen from the lines quoted that, although Pope looks upon "Numbers" as an important part of a poem, he considers this part no more important than the sense; like Boileau and the other Neo-Classicists, he lays stress on both the style and the reasonableness of a work of art. Stylistic qualities are not the characteristics of a poem emphasized by Shelley; in this respect he is in sharp contrast to both Pope and Boileau--especially Boileau--who go minutely into matters of style. But, as has been shown, he does not ignore reason; he gives it a place in his critical theories, even though that place is below the position of the imagination; he commends reason when it is joined to what he calls the poetic element.

It is the presence of this poetic element that constitutes poetry, for him, not the use of metre, which feature of a work he does not consider the identifying mark of poetry. In fact, he believes no line of demarcation exists between poetry and prose. "The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error."<sup>1</sup> A harmony of thought, he says, is as vital as a harmony of sound, and it was harmony of thought that Plato showed in his work. Furthermore, this writer was essentially a poet because "the truth and splendour of his imagery, and the melody of his language, are the most intense that it

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<sup>1</sup>

Defence, p. 7, ll. 31-33.





is possible to conceive."<sup>1</sup> Bacon, too, was a poet, Shelley adds, a fact attested to by both the sweetness and majesty of his rhythms as well as "the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy."<sup>2</sup> Many others also—here Shelley is making the broadest possible application of his definition of poetry—may be given the name of poets: "All the authors of revolutions in opinion are not only necessarily poets as they are inventors, nor even as their words unveil the permanent analogy of things by images which partake in the life of truth; but as their periods are harmonious and rhythmical, and contain in themselves the elements of verse; being the echo of the eternal music."<sup>3</sup> He is making known once more a thought that is vital to his whole conception of poetry--the divine nature of this art; it is always the "eternal music" that he hears in the poets; it is the "indestructible order" to which they give expression. No matter whether their representations take the form of verse, of prose, of civil or religious institutions, those who reflect this order are, to Shelley, poets. To the extent that they possess the faculty of approximation to the beautiful; that they, through their awareness of the inner harmony, apprehend the true relations between things, will they be able to express in their works an outer harmony and unveil those truths which others, of less sensitivity than the poets,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 35-37.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8, l. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 13-20.

Some of the words used here reflect an Aristotelian idea: those people described are "necessarily" poets because they are "inventors."



are unable to perceive. Furthermore, Shelley asserts, they are poets whether or not they use the traditional forms of rhythm, those who have used such forms being no less great as poets than those who have not; the supreme modern poets--Shakespare, Dante,<sup>1</sup> and Milton--"are philosophers of the very loftiest power."

It can easily be seen that the conception of poetry expressed here by Shelley is much broader than that of any other of the critics under consideration, as well as much more extended than the ordinary meaning of the term as used in his day. Another point of interest in these lines is his stressing the power of poetry to unveil the truth. Boccaccio is primarily interested in something else, the idea that poetry "veils truth in a fair and fitting garment of fiction."<sup>2</sup> Later on the Defence Shelley concerns himself with this function of poetry also.

There is still another point, to which reference has already been made in comments on some lines from An Essay on Criticism. There is a pronounced resemblance between Shelley's ideas in the passage quoted above and those quoted from Pope in which he lays stress on both "numbers" and thought. Shelley states that a harmony of thought is as vital as a harmony of sound; he praises Plato for his exhibition of the former, and also warmly commends Bacon for his "almost superhuman wisdom." Moreover, he acclaims as the "supreme modern poets" those who are "philosophers of the very loftiest power." Both Shelley and Pope appear to feel that a

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 8, ll. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 14. 7, 39.



mere facility in the rhythm is not enough.

It is the underlying thought of a poem that Shelley is stressing when he calls poetry "the very image of life expressed in its universal truth."<sup>1</sup> It is thus different from a story, he says, which is made up of detached facts bound together by time, place, circumstance, cause, and effect; which is partial in its application to life and may suffer injury to its beauty and use through the power of time. In contrast, a poem "is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is itself the image of all other minds."<sup>2</sup> A poem, moreover, Shelley continues, is universal in its meaning, and time only augments its beauty by revealing "new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 8, ll. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 31-34.

The "unchangeable forms" mentioned here by Shelley are suggestive of Plato's absolute and eternal forms. According to Mr. Dowden, Shelley finished his translation of the Symposium in July, 1818, and proceeded to a study of the Phaedrus (see The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley, pp. 395-396). The Defence was not written until 1821. That the influence of Plato persisted, however, may be shown by such poems produced during the interim as Prometheus Unbound and Epipsychidion.

Yet when Shelley calls poetry "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth," he is, if one interprets the word "image" as representation, expressing the Aristotelian conception of art. Poetry to him, as to Aristotle, would appear to mean something more than a third-hand copy of the Idea. Shelley is close to the Plato of the Symposium and the Phaedrus, but far from the Plato of the Republic. A further suggestion of Aristotle might be noted in Shelley's accepting the idea of the universality of poetry, especially in contrast to the nature of a story of particular facts--a contrast which Sidney, too, brings out forcibly in his assertion of the superiority of poetry to history.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 9, ll. 8-9.



Boccaccio, too, feels that genuine poetry is characterized by depth of meaning. It is wrong, he says, to suppose that poets convey no meaning beneath the surface of their fiction--truth and eloquence can go together. Great men "have laid away the very deepest meanings in their poems..."<sup>1</sup> Even though poetry may seem obscure at times, this, Boccaccio feels, is not a just reason for condemning it, since the philosophers themselves and even Holy Writ are obscure. Furthermore, the fault may be in the reader rather than in the poet. A poet is sometimes deliberately obscure: he veils the truth with fiction that the truth may not be cheapened; that it may be discovered only through the utmost exertion, and held more precious for this reason. Those who cannot perceive the underlying meaning of poetry should go back to grammar school, Boccaccio states flatly, for one who wants to appreciate this form of art must read, study, and persevere.<sup>2</sup>

The most interesting thing in the discussion of this point is that the five critics being considered agree in the idea that there must be definite content to real poetry, that smooth-flowing lines are not enough.

There is something in this content, Shelley believes, that reveals the divine nature of poetry. According to his conception of it, the poet creates in accordance with the principles of absolute Good, works in harmony with the eternal rhythm and order,

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 10, 54.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 14. 12.





reflects those ideas which relate him, the human creator, to his source. Shelley thus identifies the Beautiful with the Good, this identification forming, as will be shown later, one of the cardinal points in the arguments he advances for the morality of poetry.

He is not alone <sup>1</sup>is thus relating the creation of poetry to a divine source. Boccaccio says that poetry, like philosophy, "proceeds from the bosom of God." Sidney states that the chief poets have been those who imitated the "inconceivable excellencies of GOD."<sup>2</sup> The Neo-Classicists, too, agree with Shelley on this point. Boileau asserts that it is foolish for an author to hope to scale the heights of Parnassus unless he feels du ciel l'influence<sup>3</sup> secrète." Pope, in his address to the "triumphant Bards," prays:

O may some spark of your celestial fire  
The last, the meanest of your sons inspire, 4

Armed with their conviction of the divine nature of poetry, Boccaccio and Sidney contend with those adversaries who allege the Platonic proscription of verse as an argument against this form of art. Boccaccio asserts that Plato would not have banished all poets; that he surely would not have expelled poets like Ennius,

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 7, 39.

<sup>2</sup>Apology, p. 158, ll. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 282.

<sup>4</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 69, ll. 195-196.

<sup>5</sup>Mr. J. W. H. Atkins states (see Literary Criticism in Antiquity, vol. I, p. 52) that Plato advanced beyond the position he holds in the Republic, as far as the philosophical argument used there against poetry is concerned. He adds that the kind of "imitation" Plato "associates with poetry in its highest form" is "a process which represented things as they ought to be, and not in their actuality." This interpretation of Plato brings Shelley very close to the Greek philosopher, because it is always an idealized concept of poetry that Shelley expresses.



Virgil, and Petrarch; that it is only the dregs of poetry Plato would have banished, every art or system of knowledge having its dregs; that the honorable among poets, Plato surely would have left in peace, where they should also be left by the cavilers a-<sup>1</sup>gainst poetry. Sidney, too, is unwilling to accept the ban on the poets expressed in the Republic; his attitude is much similar to that of Boccaccio, although he admits that the treating of this Platonic argument against poetry lays a great burden upon him because of his reverence for Plato as the most poetical of philoso-<sup>2</sup>pers. Thus he will not consider, he says, malicious objections that might be made to this argument, which are weak fundamentally because they concern the abuse rather than the right use of philosophy. And it is the abuse of poetry, he maintains, rather than the right use of it, to which Plato objects, in the same manner that St. Paul, when referring to two poets, cautioned against the abuse of philosophy. Plato would not drive out all poets, Sidney asserts; he would banish only the bad, those who held and spread<sup>3</sup> "wrong opinions of the Deitie..." Thus those who allege Plato ("vnder whose Lyons skin they would make an Asse-like braying<sup>4</sup> against Poesie") as an opponent to poetry are mistaken; Plato really honored poetry, saying that it is "a vary inspiring of a diuine force, farre aboue man's wit..."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 9.

<sup>2</sup>This opinion of Plato is similar to Shelley's.

<sup>3</sup>Apology, p. 192, l. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 11-12.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., ll. 16-17.



These two apologists are the only ones among the five critics discussed in this chapter who have anything to say concerning the Platonic argument against poetry. Boileau and Pope are not writing defenses, but manuals of criticism, produced in an age that was thinking of Horace rather than Plato. Shelley, too, is silent on this matter, although there is much evidence to show his familiarity with Plato and a perceptible influence on his ideas. It may be that he considered the refutation of such a charge unnecessary or out-moded.

In the contrast, discussed before, that Shelley draws between a poem and a "story of particular facts," he remarks that the latter "is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted." <sup>1</sup> A similar point of view is expressed by Boileau, who says:

Il n'est point de serpent ni de monstre odieux  
Qui, par l'art imité, ne puisse plaire aux yeux:  
D'un pinceau délicat l'artifice agréable  
Du plus affreux objet fait un objet amiable. <sup>2</sup>

Boileau is, of course, stressing here the power of art to dress up nature; but in the lines that follow he shows clearly, by reference to tragedy, the power of poetry to make the frightful pleasant:

Ainsi, pour nous charmer, la Tragédie en pleurs  
D'Oedipe tout sanglant fit parler les douleurs,  
D'Orestes parricide exprima les alarmes,  
Et, pour nous divertir, nous arracha des larmes. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 9, ll. 11-14.

<sup>2</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 334.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 335.





This power of poetry to transmute base metal, Shelley illustrates in his own drama The Cenci. Mr. Shawcross calls attention to what seems to him a contradiction between the poet's practice in this drama and his theory as expressed in the preface to Prometheus Unbound, where Shelley says that the purpose of his work is "to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence." Beatrice, in The Cenci, is by no means a character of this type. The poet himself realizes this: in his Preface to The Cenci he states that if Beatrice had thought differently, "she would have been better and wiser; but she would never have been a tragic character." In this statement and in his representation of Beatrice Shelley appears to be doing what Mr. Shawcross suggests, approaching "a more modern conception of the true nature of poetic idealization, as consisting in an interpretation of life which suppresses nothing essential, but which by emphasizing the significant traits and omitting the irrelevant in its subject-matter (be this, morally speaking, good or bad), attains a vividness of portraiture which actual experience<sup>1</sup> never or rarely affords." A letter from Shelley to Leigh Hunt (1819) contains the following reference to The Cenci: "The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of the instructor, and am content to paint with<sup>2</sup> such colours as my heart furnishes that which has been." In the

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<sup>1</sup> Shawcross, p. XXXII.

<sup>2</sup> Ingpen, pp. 690-691.



Preface to The Cenci Shelley makes another significant statement: "The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching of the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant, and kind." Thus the drama may, according to Shelley, have for its purpose the giving of the human heart a knowledge of itself, a view which is, as Mr. Shawcross suggests, consonant with modern theory and practice.

There appears some contradiction, however between this theory expressed in the Preface to The Cenci as well as put into practice in the drama itself, and that found in the Preface to Prometheus Unbound, where the presenting of "beautiful idealisms" is given by Shelley as his purpose in this drama. But it is important to consider also what Shelley says in the Defence, written two years later. He states here that a poem is "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth," a position close to that taken at the time of Prometheus Unbound. Yet he makes another assertion in the later essay, saying that poetry when handling a fearful or monstrous story has the power of making distorted images beautiful; thus he admits the presence in poetry of other than "moral idealisms." But it is the treatment of these "distorted images" that justifies their presence. Such a character as Beatrice, for instance, if treated in a "story of particular facts," might, according to

the same way as the other two, but the first is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The first case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The second case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The third case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The fourth case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The fifth case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The sixth case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The seventh case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The eighth case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The ninth case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The tenth case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The eleventh case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

The twelfth case is the only one which is not a simple case of the other two.

Shelley, become further distorted, whereas, when such an image is handled in poetry, it takes on a peculiar kind of beauty, for the poet treats it in such a way as to bring out the eternal truth inherent in it and make it a much more acceptable character than it would have been without the transmuting power of poetry. Through his manner of treatment, then, the poet achieves a moral end--and this effect of poetry is always strongly emphasized by Shelley in the Defence. Thus his later work seems to show a reconciling, to some extent, of the opposite points of view expressed before.

The transmuting power of poetry is felt by Sidney also: he says that the world of nature is "brassen," but the poets "deliuer<sup>1</sup> a golden." In the remarks that he makes on the drama specifically, Sidney is likewise in agreement with Shelley, asserting that<sup>2</sup> tragedy follows the laws of poetry, not history.

The similarity between Shelley's idea of the transmuting power of poetry and Boileau's has already been pointed out. Boileau, like Shelley, believes that poetry can transform the hideous in the drama and make it pleasing; through his treatment of a subject the author obtains his effect, for he must write pour nous charmer,<sup>3</sup> pour nous divertir; the secret of his success is d'abord de plaire<sup>4</sup> et de toucher... There is a marked difference in emphasis between the two critics, however, illustrated very well by each one's

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<sup>1</sup> Apology, p. 156, l. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 197-198.

<sup>3</sup> L'Art Poétique, p. 335.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 337.



remarks on the drama. Although Boileau does take into consideration the moral effect of poetry, showing his belief always that this art should instruct as well as please, and expresses throughout L'Art Poétique a high opinion of verse, this attitude noticeable in his discussion of the drama—he advises the author who wishes to produce something worthy of appearing on the stage: Qu'en<sup>1</sup>  
nobles sentiments il soit partout fécond—he is much concerned with matters of form and details of structure. Such things as the necessity of a smooth, clear exposition, the observing of the unities of place and time, the refraining from offering the spectator anything incredible or implausible, the successful denouement, receive much attention in his handling of the drama. Shelley is not interested in points like these; he does not give the practical, specific advice to playwrights that is found in the other's work. Also, the emphasis in the Defence on the moral purpose of dramatic verse is much greater than that found in L'Art Poétique. It is the moral effect of the drama with which Shelley is vitally concerned, the results produced upon society by the presence or absence of the poetic element in this form of writing.

Before entering upon a consideration of the particular way in which poetry produces a moral effect, Shelley discusses one more point, which is an outgrowth of his broad definition of this art. "The parts of a composition may be poetical, without the composition as a whole being a poem."<sup>2</sup> All the great historians, he con-

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<sup>1</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 9, ll. 15-16.





tinues--Herodotus, Plutarch, Livy--were poets, for there are found in their works examples of a sentence or a word "which may be a spark of inextinguishable thought."<sup>1</sup> They are for this reason poets; even though their plan of writing "restrained them from developing this faculty in its highest degree, they made copious and ample amends for their subjection, by filling all the interstices of their subjects with living images."<sup>2</sup> Thus, instead of engaging in any discussion as to the relative values of history and poetry--a theme much dwelt upon by Sidney--Shelley applies to history one criterion: is there found in it a poetic spark? If so, the author is a poet and does the work of a poet. Even though these "sparks of inextinguishable thought" are not so frequent in their work as in the writings of those who have more freedom in the developing of their ideas, the historians, Shelley says, have "made amends" for this lack by the use of "living images"--poetry, to Shelley, is "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth."

In a brief transitional paragraph Shelley summarizes what he has said thus far in the Defence, and indicates his next line of thought: "Having determined what is poetry, and who are poets, let us proceed to estimate its effects upon society."<sup>3</sup>

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This appears to be a favorite image of Shelley's; in his apostrophe to the West Wind he says:

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

One might point out again the stress that he lays on the ideas, the thought, found in that which he considers poetry.

<sup>2</sup>This suggests the advice given by Shelley to Keats in a letter written in August, 1820, "load every rift of your subject with ore."

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 9, ll. 27-28.



He remarks, first of all, upon the pleasure produced by poetry; it gives delight as well as wisdom. This idea of the pleasure received from poetry is stressed throughout the Defence, and is a very old one, going back as far as the Poetics and even to a time previous to it.<sup>1</sup> Italian criticism of the Renaissance lays much emphasis on the thought that the purpose of poetry is to please and to instruct.<sup>2</sup>

The apologies of Boccaccio and Sidney reflect this idea, which is found in the works of the Neo-Classicalists also; pleasure

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The function of the minstrel, as reflected in the Odyssey, was, according to Mr. Scott-James (see The Making of Literature, p. 33), "to cause pleasure, to make more complete the satisfaction of a banquet."

Because of Shelley's familiarity with the works of Plato (see Miss Lillian Winstanley's Platonism in Shelley for a complete discussion of this point) and the resemblances that have been noticed already between the ideas of the English and the Greek critics, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the influence of Plato may ~~have~~ be felt in this part of Shelley's Defence also. The older philosopher admits the innate charm of poetry; his Phaedrus is full of the thought of poetry's being able to give pleasure--in fact, the seductiveness of poetry alarms the Plato of the Republic. Yet in this work and also in his Philebus Plato feels that poetry can, and should, do something more than merely give pleasure. Mr. J. W. H. Atkins (see Literary Criticism in Antiquity, vol. I, p. 61) is of the opinion that Plato's idea of the ultimate end of poetry is the moulding of character. Shelley feels that the definite effects of poetry are both delight and the changing of character for the better. His description, however, of the way in which poetry brings about this ethical effect, does not show the same indebtedness as the other ideas mentioned.

2

Mr. Saintsbury (see A History of Literary Criticism, vol. II, p. 43) calls attention to Daniello's saying that the mission of the poet is to delight, teach, and persuade; to Minturno's strongly insisting upon the delight produced by the Imitation (ibid., p. 52); to Castelvetro's believing that poetry should delight and even going so far as to say: "What do beginning, middle, and end matter in a poem, provided that it delights?" (ibid., p. 87.)



as well as profit, moving as well as instructing--these thoughts are found in the works of all the critics under consideration.

Boccaccio calls poetry a "fervid and exquisite invention," which is "sublime in its effects"; he acknowledges the pleasure that may be derived from it. He also maintains that poetry is a useful art, and that those who say it is futile because it sings of crimes and bad practices are not distinguishing between good poetry and bad. Verse should not be universally condemned, he asserts, because a few writers erred; rather, it is a science full of honor, since it is "full of the sap of natural vigor for those who would through<sup>1</sup> fiction subdue the senses with the mind."

The instruction as well as the delight that may be given by poetry is recognized by Sidney also, who says that poetry is, "to speak<sup>2</sup> metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this end, to teach and delight." As has been shown, he asserts that poetry is superior to history in that it both gives knowledge and incites the mind to the good; that it is superior to philosophy also in that it moves, and this moving of the reader "is of a higher degree than<sup>3</sup> teaching." In another passage he reaffirms this point that poetry is a fruitful knowledge; there never was a more fruitful one, he maintains, because poetry "teacheth and moueth to vertue."<sup>4</sup> The Vates, the true poets, not only imitate, and imitate both to teach

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 6, 39.

<sup>2</sup>Apology, p. 158, ll. 8-10.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 170-173.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 184, l. 11.





and to delight, but also "delight to moue men to take...goodnes in  
<sup>1</sup>  
 hande..."

Boileau and Pope admit the delight given by poetry, yet, like the others, believe that the purpose of this art is twofold. Boileau says:

Auteurs, prêtez l'oreille à mes instructions.  
 Voulez-vous faire aimer vos riches fictions?  
 Qu'en savantes leçons votre muse fertile  
 Partout joigne au plaisant le solide et l'utile.  
 Un lecteur sage fuit un vain amusement,  
 Et veut mettre à profit son divertissement. 2

In connection with this point it is interesting to observe that Boileau has a great deal to say about the power of poetry to move its readers or hearers. He addresses these remarks to those who are contemplating the writing of dramas:

Que dans tout vos discours la passion émue  
 Aille chercher le coeur, l'échauffe et le remue.  
 Si d'un beau mouvement l'agréable fureur  
 Souvent ne nous remplit d'une douce «terreur»,  
 Ou n'excite en notre âme une «pitié» charmante,  
 En vain vous étalez une scène savante:  
 Vos froids raisonnements ne feront qu'attiédir,  
 Un spectateur toujours paresseux d'applaudir,  
 Et qui, des vains efforts de votre rhétorique  
 Justement fatigué, s'endort, ou vous critique.  
 Le secret est d'abord de plaire, et de toucher:  
 Inventez des ressorts qui puissent m'attacher. 3

Similar ideas are expressed in his discussion of the elegy:

Je hais vos vains auteurs, dont la muse forcée  
 M'entretient de ses feux, toujours froide et glacée;  
 Qui s'affligent par art, fous de sens rassis,  
 S'érigent, pour rimer, en amoureux transis.  
 .....  
 Il faut que le coeur seul parle dans l'élégie. 4

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 159, ll. 20-22.

<sup>2</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 388.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 336-337.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 313 and 315.



He satirizes those authors of the ode who lack the power to move their readers:

Loin ces rimeurs craintifs dont l'esprit flegmatique  
Garde dans ses fureurs un order didactique; 1

Thus, in a type of poetry which should endeavor to reach the heart, to stir it and kindle it, Boileau does not wish to be put off with froids raisonnements. He is, of course, following tradition in his attributing to each class of poetry the pleasure peculiar to its type, and in some of his remarks on the drama is expressing the Aristotelian conception of the "pity" and "terror" to be induced by this form. In spite of this, however, his stress on the power of poetry to move is unusual for a man of his time, much greater than that found in An Essay on Criticism, where Pope, too, follows tradition in his idea of the twofold purpose of poetry, satirizing those

Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,  
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,  
Not for the doctrine, but the music there. 2

After describing the delight given by poetry Shelley comes to the matter of the proper judging of this art, stating that a poet's contemporaries are not fully aware of the excellence of his work, and that in order to evaluate truly what he has done, the jury which tries him "must be composed of his peers: it must be empanelled  
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by time from the selectest of the wise of many generations."

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>2</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 71, ll. 141-143.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 10, ll. 4-6.

This idea is similar to the thoughts expressed by Longinus, that those passages which "contain the beauty and truth of the sublime" are identical with those "which always please, and please all readers;" also, that "the judgment of literature is the final after-growth of much endeavor." (Scott-James, The Making of Literature, p. 93, and Saintsbury, Loci Critici, p. 43.)

Plato, however, is the likely source for this idea of Shelley's, for, according to Mr. Atkins' interpretation, Plato's opinion is that the delight given by poetry must be that "of the best and best educated, and especially of the one man who is pre-eminent in virtue and education." (Op. cit., p. 64.)



In view of the high opinion of the poets expressed by Shelley throughout the Defence, his remarking that those who attempt to judge their works must be their equals, is very significant.

Boccaccio's idea of the judges of poetry has many points of similarity to Shelley's. The Italian critic feels that labor and perseverance are necessary for a complete understanding of poetry,<sup>1</sup> and attacks the superficiality of many who set themselves up as critics;<sup>2</sup> he believes that the ideal judge is one possessing superior qualifications, and expresses the hope that there will be men<sup>3</sup> in the future who will devote themselves to a study of poetry. Both he and Shelley are different in this respect from Sidney, who feels that the appeal of poetry is democratic, and calls it "the foode for the tenderest stomachs."<sup>4</sup>

Boileau, too, feels that the judges of writing should be properly qualified for their work. He advises an author to appreciate the fact that he has someone to criticize him, to yield to reason, and to be willing to make changes where such are considered necessary; but, he cautions, ne vous rendez pas dès qu'un sot vous<sup>5</sup> reprend. He shows how mistaken the judgments of the ignorant may be:

Souvent dans son orgueil un subtil ignorant  
Par d'injustes dégoûts combat toute une pièce,  
Blâme des plus beaux vers la noble hardiesse.  
On a beau réfuter ses vains raisonnements:  
Son esprit se complait dans ses faux jugements;  
Et sa foible raison, de clarté dépourvue,

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 12.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 14. 9.

<sup>3</sup>G. G. 15. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Apology, p. 167, ll. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 386.



Pense que rien n'échappe a sa débile vue.  
 Ses conseils sont à craindre; et, si vous croyez,  
 Pensant fuir un écueil, souvent vous vous noyez. 1

Not only does Boileau advise an author to beware of the judgments of the ignorant; he also recommends that a writer scan his own work with an eye quick to detect faults, that he choose wise friends for an honest appraisal of his efforts, and that he be willing to submit to their criticism.

Craignez-vous pour vos vers la censure publique?  
 Soyez-vous à vous-même un sévère critique.  
 L'ignorance toujours est prête à s'admirer.  
 Faites-vous des amis prompts à vous censurer;  
 Qu'ils soient de vos écrits les confidents sincères,  
 Et de tous vos défauts les zélés adversaires.  
 Dépouillez devant eux l'arrogance d'auteur;  
 Mais sachez de l'ami discerner le flatteur;  
 Tel vous semble applaudir, qui vous raille et vous joue.  
 Aimez qu'on vous conseille et non pas qu'on vous loue. 2

Pope advises the critic that he make a searching analysis of himself:

But you who seek to give and merit fame,  
 And justly bear a Critic's noble name,  
 Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,  
 How far your Genius, Taste, and Learning go,  
 Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,  
 And mark that point where Sense and Dulness meet. 3

Some positive persisting fops we know,  
 Who if once wrong will needs be always so;  
 But you with pleasure own your errors past,  
 And make each day a critique on the last. 4

Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,  
 Make use of ev'ry friend--and ev'ry foe. 5

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 386-387.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>3</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 67, ll. 46-51.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 75, ll. 9-12.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 70, ll. 13-14.





He would extend the range of critics suggested by Boileau, to include enemies as well as friends, feeling, perhaps, that the former would not be slow to pick out weaknesses in the work of an author. He also counsels prompt action on the part of a competent critic:

Be thou the first true merit to befriend;  
His praise is lost who stays till all commend. 1

As to the manner of judging, Pope suggests:

A perfect judge will read each work of wit  
With the same spirit that its author writ;  
Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find  
Where Nature moves, and Rapture warms the mind. 2

Thus, not only must the judge be competent, and quick to praise real merit; he must be broad-minded and not one who merely cavils at unimportant errors. The critic described by Pope in these passages would probably stand among the ranks of the "selectest" mentioned by Shelley. Another interesting thing about Pope's ideas, especially those expressed in the last quotation, is his stressing the appreciative side of criticism, an aspect of this art strongly emphasized ever since the time of the Romantics.

All of the critics considered, with the exception of Sidney, feel that the value of a literary work can best be estimated by one who is thoroughly qualified for such a task. Ignorance in this important business is, they believe, inexcusable. Their ideas are very similar to that of Shelley, that the judge shall be among the "selectest of the wise of many generations," except that Shelley stresses the last three words and the others appear to be thinking

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 73, ll. 274-275.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 70, ll. 33-36.



more of the criticism of a poet's work by his contemporaries.

Continuing his discussion of the delight given by poetry, Shelley remarks that the poems of Homer and his contemporaries were a delight to ancient Greece in that they were the elements of their social system; furthermore, that the works of Homer delighted because he "embodied the ideal perfection of his age<sup>1</sup> in human character..." Those who became acquainted with these works, Shelley says, admired, imitated, and finally identified themselves with, the characters represented. Nor is the fact, Shelley continues, that these characters portrayed by Homer are far from moral perfection a reason for valid objection to them, because "Every epoch...has deified its peculiar errors."<sup>2</sup> The vices of a poet's contemporaries, Shelley says, are merely the temporary dress in which the poet arrays his creations. Even though the garb be "the most barbarous and tasteless costume," Shelley maintains that "the beauty of the internal nature cannot be so far concealed by its accidental vesture, but that the spirit of its form shall communicate itself to the very disguise, and indicate the shape it hides from the manner in which it is worn."<sup>3</sup> Shelley seems to feel that this temporary attire will in no way diminish from the loftiness of the poet's original conceptions, which always

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 10, ll. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 28-30.

Shelley's thought that Homer revealed the human nature about him is similar to that expressed by Pope (in An Essay on Criticism, p. 69): "young Maro" found "Nature and Homer...the same."

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 11, ll. 3-7.

All of this passage under consideration is significant because of its relation to something discussed at length by Shelley later, the moral effect of poetry.



reflect his inner perception of the eternal rhythm and order.

Furthermore, such a disguise for his characters may show wisdom on the part of the poet; "Few poets of the highest class have chosen to exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked truth and splendour..."<sup>1</sup> Most of what Shelley has said before this has been concerned with the poet's unveiling truth and revealing it to others; now, for a moment, he turns to a different function of the poet's art, suggesting that truth, the unveiled beauty, may be too dazzling for human perception and that "it is doubtful whether the alloy of costume, habit, &c., be not necessary to temper this planetary music for mortal ears."<sup>2</sup> Yet the poet, according to Shelley, will always present in his work "the very image of life in its eternal truth," even though he finds it necessary at times to temper his conceptions that the truth may be apprehended by those whose minds have not been illuminated by his vision.

Why, then, Shelley reasons, is poetry ever considered immoral? The trouble is, he says, that this notion "rests upon a misconception of the manner in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man."<sup>3</sup> Poetry acts in a fashion quite different from that of the ethical sciences (Shelley's expression), which teach directly by giving definite precept and example. Those with a narrow, Puritanic concept of art, Shelley says, can appreciate this method

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 11, ll. 10-12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 12-14.

<sup>3</sup>In his discussion of the work of Dante and Milton, occurring later in the Defence, Shelley applies the same ideas he is expressing here.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 11, ll. 16-18.





only and thus condemn poetry because it does not inculcate directly principles of morality. Yet this direct teaching, Shelley asserts, has not borne the fruit that it should have; it is not "for want of admirable doctrines that men hate, and despise, and censure, and deceive, and subjugate one another."<sup>1</sup> There is another and more effective method of inculcating moral principles--the one used by poetry. How, then, does poetry operate? "It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought."<sup>2</sup> These combinations are not perceived until the poet, who apprehends the inner rhythm and order, makes them known. Poetry thus "lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar..."<sup>3</sup>

This conception of Shelley's is quite similar to Wordsworth's idea of poetry's being able to glorify the commonplace, as will be shown in the next chapter. Sidney has already been quoted as saying that the poet's work surpasses that of nature even, since the world of nature is only "Brasen" and the poets "deliuer a golden." Boileau expresses the same idea concerning the work of Homer:

Tout ce qu'il<sup>a</sup> touché se convertit en or. 4

The French critic also praises Theocritus and Virgil highly because of their ability to impart a charm to familiar things.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 20-22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 23-26.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 26-28.

<sup>4</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 367.



Seuls, dans leurs doctes vers, ils pourront vous apprendre  
 Par quel art sans bassesse un auteur peut descendre;  
 Chanter Flore, les champs, Pomone, les vergers;  
 Au combat de la flûte animer deux bergers,  
 Des plaisirs de l'amour vanter la douce amorce;  
 Changer Narcisse en fleur, couvrir Daphné d'écorce;  
 Et par quel art encor l'éloge quelquefois  
 Rend dignes d'un consul la campagne et les bois. 1

Because of this power of poetry to reveal the hidden beauty of the world, it will always strongly affect its readers, Shelley says; those who have once beheld the representations of the poet, still illuminated by the light of his vision, will keep these images in their minds "as memorials of that gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it coex-<sup>2</sup>ists."

Shelley now advances another--and more important--reason for his belief that poetry exerts such a great influence upon its readers: "The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beau-<sup>3</sup>tiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own." Shelley has already said that the readers of Homer admired, imitated, and finally identified themselves with, the characters this writer portrayed. This ability of a reader to identify himself with the beautiful existing outside himself is very important in Shelley's conception of the way in which poetry produces its effects. This identification of a person with something else,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 312-313.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 11, ll. 31-33.

Mr. Spingarn remarks (*op. cit.*, p. 128) that the idea of poetry's being able to give splendor and dignity to the most trivial idea was particularly appealing to the Renaissance. He quotes Tasso as saying that the poet's function is "to make of old concepts new ones...and to make common concepts of his own." Mr. Spingarn also alludes to Shelley, saying that this writer conceives of poetry's operating in a similar fashion, but "in a higher and more ideal sense."

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 11, ll. 33-37.



this going out of his own nature, are, Shelley continues, dependent upon the imagination, and will develop as the imagination develops. Shelley has already said that these processes are synonymous with love. Thus, there is a direct relation between the extent of the imagination and the development of the power of love. This capability, Shelley identifies with the good, saying: "A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensively and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own."<sup>1</sup> It appears to be Shelley's idea that, once the imagination is quickened, the power of love will be developed. Under the stimulus of the imagination, then, the reader of poetry will identify himself with the characters, this going out of his own nature meaning that the capability of love is awakened within him. A noticeably beneficial effect will result if these representations in the poem are those embodying "the beautiful." Even if such portrayals are not "moral idealisms," but "distorted images," there may still be a beneficent effect, Shelley has said in his discussion of The Cenci, for the sympathetic understanding of these characters may give the human heart a knowledge of itself. As has been pointed out already, however, it is the "moral idealism" that Shelley prefers and to which he devotes the greatest amount of attention in the Defence. The reader's identification of himself with such a type of charac-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12, ll. 37-3.



ter would obviously produce upon him a moral effect. Such seems to be Shelley's meaning in this passage.

Before any further development of these ideas is considered, a point of much significance should be pointed out. That is the close connection of Shelley's ideas and opinions with his own life. As has been shown in a previous chapter, whatever theory Shelley held, he endeavored to put into practice, especially if he felt that such a theory constituted a right principle of action. This habit of his was strikingly illustrated in his constant and unselfish attempts to aid those about him less fortunate than himself. When he says in the Defence that "The great secret of morals is love," and that the "good man" is one who can "imagine intensively and comprehensively...put himself in the place of another, and of many others," he is expressing as part of his poetic theory what he has already put into practice in his life. His opinions--even his critical theories--thus appear to reflect the whole man.

This identification of oneself with another, this going out of one's nature--to Shelley, synonymous with love--are, he has said, dependent on the imagination; and those who are the most imaginative will be able the most quickly to realize the "great secret of morals," which is this same love. The imagination must first be stimulated, however, before the beneficent effects will follow. Shelley has thus paved the way for his expression of one of the most original and significant ideas in the Defence: "The





great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause."<sup>1</sup> Shelley has built up his position, step by step, until in one swift bound he reaches the apex. Now the psychologist in him speaks and attempts to point out the way in which the artist can realize his essentially moral motive, not in a way which will hopelessly confuse the provinces of art and morality, but in a fashion that will make use of a most powerful force always actively operating in the production of moral good--the imagination. Poetry, he says, acts directly upon this force, for poetry "enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food."<sup>2</sup> This statement may be considered in connection with what Shelley has already said about the poet: he possesses the faculty of approximation to the beautiful; he is able to express the indestructible order. This expression, through the conceptions that it embodies, brings food to the imagination of the reader--"thoughts of ever new delight"--for the author of these nourishing representations is one who has apprehended, as Shelley puts it, the relation

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 12, ll. 3-6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 6-11.



between the highest pleasure and its cause. Then, according to the operation of psychological laws--implied but not explained specifically by Shelley--these thoughts of delight will attract to themselves other thoughts, the resultant voids leaving room for the entering of still more concepts furnished by a reading of the poet's work, until finally the whole lump be leavened, the dormant imagination stimulated and made an active force, the ultimate result of its operation being the quickening of love as the reader's nature expands and he identifies himself with the "beautiful" in the poem. Moreover, the greater use the imagination receives, the faster it will develop, Shelley says; poetry will thus always act upon the cause of moral good, for "Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb."<sup>1</sup>

In the light of these facts a poet, Shelley says, "would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his time and place, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither."<sup>2</sup> Such a practice would not result in the same beneficent effects upon the reader, appears to be Shelley's thought here. It is true, as Shelley has said before, that a poet like Homer may find it necessary to array his concepts in the temporary dress of his time. But such a garb, Shelley

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 11-13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 13-16.



maintains, does not conceal the underlying beauty and grace of the original idea or the strength and glory of the poet's intuitive perceptions, all of which he cannot express because it is desirable at times for him to veil the truth and splendor of his conceptions in order that he may "temper the planetary music for mortal ears." The undeveloped imagination would be unable to apprehend these conceptions in their full strength and brilliance.

Thus, Shelley asserts, poetry does produce a moral effect because it operates directly upon the imagination, which is "the great instrument of moral good," and which, in turn, enables the reader to identify himself with the characters present in the poem, this sympathetic identification and going out of his nature being a manifestation of the quickening of the great principle of love--the "secret of morals." Since the effect of poetry upon the imagination is the cause of all that follows, a poet should be careful about that which he puts into his work, that upon which the imagination of the reader will feed. Thus he will "do ill" if he embodies in his poetry his own conceptions of right and wrong, limited usually by conditions of time and place. Whence, then, will the true conceptions of the poet come? Another section of the Defence must be anticipated here, a more complete discussion of which will occur later. Shelley accepts the idea of the divine inspiration of genius; the poet will thus do well to wait





for the moment of inspiration rather than embody in his verse his own conceptions of right and wrong.

It must be admitted that, although Shelley progresses in a logical fashion to the importance of the imagination as an instrument of moral good, the active operation of this imagination resulting in the development of love, "the great secret of morals," his explanation of the precise way in which the imagination is acted upon by the poem could be, from the point of view of psychology at least, more completely indicated. Shelley may not have considered this necessary, of course. Another point which might result in a confusion of ideas is the way in which Shelley uses the word "imagination" in this part of the Defence. Throughout the greater portion of this work he employs it to describe the transcendental, creative faculty of the artist; in this section of the Defence the word refers to a faculty possessed by the reader of a poem rather than the creator. Furthermore, as used here, it contains other psychological elements, particularly the principle of association of ideas. The relationship between the different elements, however, has not been made so clear as the position taken by Shelley would appear to demand, or as the possibilities inherent in his theory would justify.

One thing, though, is always clear: the kind of moral effect aimed at by Shelley is not that which didactic poetry attempts to produce. He says that if a poet should assume "the



inferior office of interpreting the effect, in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign a glory in the participation of the cause."<sup>1</sup> Some of the lesser poets, he continues, "have frequently affected a moral aim, and the effect of their poetry is diminished in exact proportion to the degree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose."<sup>2</sup> Shelley would not have people bludgeoned, so to speak, into a condition of goodness; rather he would have this condition the result of a natural, normal process of self-development, quickened by the stimulating of the imagination as it feeds upon works of art. The greatest poetry would be that which would operate the most effectively upon the imagination of the reader, and thus produce the highest moral effect. Such an effect is produced, according to Shelley, solely because such poetry is the greatest poetry, and not because it attempts to ape the methods of the ethical sciences, which endeavor to teach directly through the use of precept and the like. Shelley's position here is a modern one; he is convinced that it is not the function of poetry to preach--using the term in its most specific sense. To him, morality is morality, and poetry is poetry, and never the two shall meet except upon poetry's own terms. The only way in which the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 12, ll. 17-20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ll. 25-28.



poet can become more effective as a moralist is to become greater as a poet. Then he will be able to communicate his vision, to reveal moral truths, in that fashion in which great poetry inevitably operates, by producing an effect upon the imagination, which is "the great instrument of moral good" and which as a result of its activity awakens the principle of love, the "great secret of morals."

Although Shelley's description of the specific way in which poetry acts upon the imagination is unique, he is, as has been shown before, by no means alone in his idea of the high ends of this art.<sup>1</sup> In connection with this point further comparison might be made between him and the other critics under consideration. Boccaccio speaks of poetry as dwelling on high and drawing men toward the enduring and eternal; he says that it, like philosophy, "proceeds from the bosom of God"; that the fervor of which it is possessed is "sublime in its effects."<sup>2</sup> When Boccaccio, however, becomes specific concerning the function of poetry, the gist of his whole argument seems to be that the poet is a theologian; therefore it is safe for a good Catholic to read his work. In his discussion of poetry in its broader sense Shelley says that the founders of religion may also be poets, yet it is doubtful that

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Saintsbury, in his discussion of the critical work of Minturno (see A History of Criticism, vol. II, p. 52), says that it is the idea of this critic that the poet will govern his Imitation by the knowledge that he is writing so as to excite admiration in his reader for that which is portrayed. This position would appear close to Shelley's.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 14. 7, 39.



he would narrow the term to the interpretation expressed by Boccaccio--no form of organized, institutional religion ever appealed to Shelley; he believed that "priests" as well as "kings" were agents of oppression.

Sidney's position is close to Shelley's in that Sidney, as has been shown, feels that poetry is effective to the degree that it will arouse in the reader a desire to do well, being superior in this respect to philosophy, which does not possess the attractions of verse. Sidney is also like Shelley in attributing the power of the poet to a source outside himself: the poet is formed in the image and likeness of his Creator; it is the divine breath of his own Maker which enables him to do such excellent things.<sup>1</sup> Yet Sidney is like Boccaccio rather than Shelley in the endeavor that he makes to appease somewhat the censors of his time, "to convince them that it [poetry] conformed to their didactic standards and satisfied their school-masterish demands for edifying knowledge..."<sup>2</sup> The inspired poet, however, breaks through at times in the Apology--he is always present in the Defence. Boccaccio, too, was desirous of propitiating the authorities of his day, attempting to show that poetry was adaptable to the needs and edification of a good Christian of his age.

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<sup>1</sup>Apology, pp. 158-159.

<sup>2</sup>Scott-James, The Making of Literature, pp. 118-119.





The idea of poetry's serving high ends is met with in the remarks of <sup>the</sup> Neo-Classical critics also; both agree that the purpose of verse is pleasure combined with profitable instruction. Boileau says:

Un lecteur sage fuit un vain amusement,  
 Et veut mettre à profit son divertissement.  
 Que votre âme et vos moeurs, peinte dans vos ouvrages,  
 N'offrent jamais de vous que de nobles images.  
 Je ne puis estimer ces dangereux auteurs  
 Qui, de l'honneur, en vers, infâmes déserteurs,  
 Trahissant la vertu sur un papier coupable,  
 Aux yeux de leurs lecteurs rendent le vice amiable. 1

Thus, he believes that the writer should apply to his work a high standard of morality. The same point of view is evident in other passages. In his discussion of satire he says that he wishes to find in this type of poetry a spirit of candor and a freedom from prudery, yet shows his disapproval of the licentious and the impure. He commends R gnier for the new graces present in his old-fashioned style of writing, but then remarks:

Heureux si ses discours, craints du chaste lecteur,  
 Ne se sentoient des lieux o   fr quentoit l'auteur,  
 Et si, du son hardi de ses rimes cyniques,  
 Il n'alarmoit souvent les oreilles pudiques! 2

Pope expresses an opinion similar to that of Boileau; licentiousness in writing is repugnant to him, but he warns against the "over-nice" attitude which may read into the words of the author a meaning not intended by him. After showing his disapproval of obscenity in a work of art, he says:

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<sup>1</sup> L'Art Po  tique, p. 388.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 330-331.



In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease  
 Sprung the rank weed, and thrived with large increase:  
 When love was all an easy monarch's care,  
 Seldom at council, never in a war;  
 Jilts ruled the state, and statesmen farces writ;  
 Nay wits had pensions, and young lords had wit;  
 The Fair sat panting at a courtier's play,  
 And not a mask went unimprov'd away;  
 The modest fan was lifted up no more,  
 And virgins smil'd at what they blush'd before.  
 The following license of a foreign reign  
 Did all the dregs of bold Socinus drain;  
 Then unbelieving priests reform'd the nation,  
 And taught more pleasant methods of salvation;  
 Where Heav'n's free subjects might their rights dispute,  
 Lest God himself should seem too absolute;  
 Pulpits their sacred satire learn'd to spare,  
 And vice admired to find a flatt'rer there!  
 Encouraged thus, Wit's Titans braved the skies,  
 And the press groan'd with licens'd blasphemies.  
 These monsters, Critics! with your darts engage,  
 Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage!  
 Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,  
 Will needs mistake an author into vice:  
 All seems infected that th' infected spy,  
 As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye. 1

After describing the way in which, he believes, poetry operates in order to produce a moral effect, Shelley turns to history for testimony on this point—a part of the Defence occupying fully half of the essay. In this search he is motivated primarily not by the instincts of the thoroughgoing historian, but by a desire to apply those principles he has already adduced, and to give illustrations of the beneficial effects of poetry upon society. Boileau, too, delves deeply into history, but for a different purpose: to trace the development of various forms of poetry from their origin to his own day.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 74, ll. 334-359.

<sup>2</sup>L'Art Poétique, Chants II and III.



The first thought developed by Shelley in this part of the Defence is: "poetry is ever found to co-exist with whatever other arts contribute to the happiness and perfection of man."<sup>1</sup> After Homer and the cyclic poets, he says, the dramatic and lyrical poets at Athens "flourished contemporaneously with all that is most perfect in the kindred expressions of the poetical faculty: architecture, painting, music, the dance, sculpture, philosophy, and...the forms of civil life."<sup>2</sup> It will be noticed that he is applying the term "poetry" here in both its more restricted and more extended meanings. There were imperfections, he admits, in the Athenian society during the century preceding the death of Sophocles, but at no other time, he asserts, have there been developed so much energy, beauty, and virtue; of no other epoch in history "have we records and fragments stamped so visibly with the image of the divinity in man."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, he continues, "it is poetry alone, in form, in action, and in language, which has rendered this epoch memorable above all others, and the storehouse of examples to everlasting time."<sup>4</sup> Written poetry existed then with the other arts, "and it is an idle inquiry to demand which gave and which received the light, which all, as from a common focus, have scattered over the darkest periods of

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 13, ll. 19-21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12, ll. 31-34.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 13, ll. 8-10.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 10-13.





succeeding time."<sup>1</sup>

The greatness of this period is especially well shown, he continues, in the excellence of the Athenian drama; "the art itself never was understood or practised according to the true philosophy of it, as at Athens."<sup>2</sup> Each element, he says, of the various ones which constituted this drama, was in itself poetical, in the broader sense of the term, and all combined "to produce a common effect in the representation of the highest idealisms of passion and power..."<sup>3</sup> In addition, Shelley remarks, each division was as perfect and admirable as the whole; each part "was disciplined into a beautiful proportion and unity one towards the other."<sup>4</sup>

The last quotation is significant, for it expresses an important idea in Shelley's theory of art. His admiration for the Greek standards of unity and proportion is influential not only in his description of the drama, but also in his judgments of specific poets and their work. It is a principle which brings him close to the Neo-Classical critics, both of whom were influenced by these standards of the ancients. Boileau is reflecting a point of view characteristic of his time when he says, in his discussion of the drama:

D'un nouveau personnage inventez-vous l'idée?

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 14-17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 28-30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 31-33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 35-36.



Qu'en tout avec soi-même il se montre d'accord  
Et qu'il soit jusqu'au bout tel qu'on l'a vu d'abord. 1

Concerning writing in general, he lays down the following laws:

Il faut que chaque chose y soit mise en son lieu;  
Que le début, la fin répondent au milieu;  
Que d'un art délicat les pièces assorties  
N'y forment qu'un seul tout de diverses parties;  
Que jamais du sujet le discours s'écartant  
N'aille chercher trop loin quelque mot éclatant. 2

Pope is of the same opinion:

In Wit, as Nature, what affects our hearts  
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts;  
'Tis not a lip or eye we beauty call,  
But the joint force and full result of all.  
Thus when we view some well proportion'd dome,  
(The world's just wonder, and ev'n thine, O Rome!)  
No single parts unequally surprise,  
All comes united to th' admiring eyes;  
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length, appear;  
The whole at once is bold and regular. 3

The Romanticist and the two Neo-Classicalists are thus alike in  
their admiration for the principles of proportion and unity. 4

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<sup>1</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>3</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 70, ll. 45-52.

<sup>4</sup>It is very likely that different influences are operating. The age of Boileau and Pope went to Aristotle and Horace for inspiration, both of whom upheld the same standards as those described here. The same influences, especially that of Horace, are not so evident in the case of Shelley. A suggested important source for many of his ideas cannot be ignored in this connection--Plato. Mr. J.W.H. Atkins (op. cit., pp. 54-55) interprets thus Plato's position on the point under discussion: "Among the outstanding principles of art revealed in his writings none is however more illuminating than that principle of organic unity which he regarded as one of the primary conditions of art...he required not only the unity or completeness that is provided by a suitable beginning, middle, and end, but also a unity that was vital in kind, all the parts being related as the parts of a living organism, so that nothing could be changed or omitted without injury to the whole...He was, in fact, the first to bring to light the logic of art, and what is still more important, those vital relations involved in artistic unity."



It is only one unity, however, that Shelley stresses; he says nothing about the unities of time and place. In his admiration for the "beautiful proportion and unity" of Greek drama he is in accord with a tradition unbroken through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, yet he differs from the Neo-Aristotelians in his silence on any unity other than this one. His ideas are in contrast here to those of Sidney and Boileau. Sidney, a Renaissance writer, follows in its entirety the tradition of his time with respect to this point, paying a great deal of attention to all of the unities and criticizing unfavorably the tragedies of his day for their neglect of them.<sup>1</sup> The tradition is still influential in Boileau's era; the French critic upholds the three unities and legislates in their favor:

Que le lieu de la scène y soit fixe et marqué.  
 Un rimeur, sans péril, delà les Pyrénées,  
 Sur la scène en un jour renferme des années.  
 Là souvent le héros d'un spectacle grossier,  
 Enfant au premier acte, est barbon et dernier.  
 Mais nous, que la raison à ses règles engage,  
 Nous voulons qu'avec art l'action ménage  
 Qu'en un lieu, qu'en un jour, en seul fait accompli  
 Tienne jusqu'à la fin le théâtre rempli. 2

In that part of his De Genealogia Deorum under consideration Boccaccio says nothing about the observance of the unities as a practice to be followed. At the close of Book XV, however, where he is addressing the King and defending himself against charges that may be brought against him by his enemies, he calls attention

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<sup>1</sup>Apology, pp. 196-198.

<sup>2</sup>L'Art Poétique, pp. 338-339.

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to the fact that he has written in accordance with the principles of unity and proportion, remarking that what he has omitted is irrelevant and that the divisions of his work could not be arranged in better order.<sup>1</sup>

Shelley's admiration for the Greek drama moves him to a critical examination of the stage of his own time, the representations on which, he says, are not such as will produce a complete and harmonious effect. He complains that there is tragedy without music and dancing; that there are music and dancing "without the highest impersonations of which they are the fit accompaniment,<sup>2</sup> and both without religion and solemnity." He also objects to the actor's appearing without a mask, especially when such a device would be, in his opinion, favorable to the producing of harmony in the total effect.

As to the mingling of comedy and tragedy, frowned upon during the Renaissance and the centuries following, Shelley shows himself favorably disposed toward this practice, saying that it is "undoubtedly an extension of the dramatic circle..."<sup>3</sup> He would place restrictions, though, on the kind of comedy used; it "should be as in King Lear, universal, ideal, and sublime."<sup>4</sup> His favorable opinion of tragedy-comedy is different from the idea of Sidney, who

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 15. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 14, ll. 2-5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 17-18.



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condemns this form of the drama. Boileau, too, remarks:

Le comique, ennemi des soupirs et des pleurs,  
N'admet point en ses vers de tragiques douleurs; 2

Both the Renaissance critic and the Neo-Classical are like Shelley, however, in the high standards of comedy they uphold. Too many writers of comedy, Sidney says, "stirre laughter in sinfull things," which "is forbidden plainly by Aristotle,"<sup>3</sup> and forget that the end of this form of the drama should be delightful teaching and delightful laughter.<sup>4</sup> Boileau says of comedy:

Mais son emploi n'est pas d'aller, dans une place,  
De mots sales et bas charmer la populace. 5

He expresses his disapproval of that which is not in good taste, in passages like the following:

Mais pour un faux plaisant, à grossière équivoque,  
Qui, pour me divertir, n'a que la saleté,  
Qu'il s'en aille, s'il veut, sur deux tréteaux monté,  
Amusant le Pont-Neuf de ses sornettes fades,  
Aux laquais assemblés jouer ses mascarades. 6

Like Boileau, Pope attacks the low and the mean:

No pardon vile obscenity should find,  
Tho' Wit and Art conspire to move your mind;  
But dulness with obscenity must prove  
As shameful sure as impotence in love. 7

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<sup>1</sup> Apology, pp. 198-199.

<sup>2</sup> L'Art Poétique, p. 377.

<sup>3</sup> Apology, p. 200, ll. 23-25.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 201, ll. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> L'Art Poétique, p. 377.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 378.

<sup>7</sup> An Essay on Criticism, p. 74, ll. 330-333.



Boccaccio maintains that the opponents of poetry foolishly condemn what they do not understand; he says that even in the so-called evil places of poetry good may be mixed with the evil, then adds that those, of course, who deliberately portray the evil and cater to depraved appetites--the comic poets--are justly to be condemned and detested, also that their work is no longer in good repute.<sup>1</sup>

It is the type of comedy found in King Lear, Shelley continues, which, perhaps, makes this play superior to the Oedipus Tyrannus or the Agamemnon, "unless the intense power of the choral poetry, especially that of the latter, should be considered as restoring the equilibrium."<sup>2</sup> If King Lear can sustain such a comparison, Shelley decides, it "may be judged to be the most perfect specimen of the dramatic art existing in the world..."<sup>3</sup>

He then praises the Spanish dramatist, Calderon, saying that the latter did what Shakespeare neglected to do, fulfilled certain high conditions of dramatic representation, "such as the establishing a relation between the drama and religion, and the accommodating them to music and dancing..."<sup>4</sup> This idea is consistent with the reasons Shelley has already given for his admiration of Greek drama. Yet Calderon, Shelley continues, omits conditions that are still more important, "and more is lost than gained by a substi-

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 14, ll. 22-24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 25-27.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 32-34.



tution of the rigidly-defined and ever-repeated idealisms of a distorted superstition for the living impersonations of the truth of human passions."<sup>1</sup>

Something of extra-literary prejudice may have crept into the judgment expressed by Shelley in the last quotation, a reflection of his undying and often-repeated hatred of superstitions of every sort. But he and Boileau agree on the matter of the drama's containing truthful representations of human passions. After cautioning a writer against creating all his heroes in the image and likeness of himself, Boileau remarks:

La nature est en nous plus diverse et plus sage;  
Chaque passion parle un différent langage:  
La colère est superbe et veut des mots altiers;  
L'abattement s'explique en des termes moins fiers. 2

He gives further advice to those who write comedy:

Que la nature donc soit votre étude unique,  
Auteurs qui prétendez aux honneurs du comique.  
.....  
La nature, féconde en bizarres portraits,  
Dans chaque âme est marquée à de différents traits;  
Un geste la découvre, un rien la fait paroître:  
Mais tout esprit n'a pas des yeux pour la connoître. 3

Coming back to his main line of thought, the influence of poetry on society, Shelley remarks that there has been a universal recognition of the fact that there is a close connection between the presence or absence of poetry and the good and evil in the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15, ll. 35-2.

<sup>2</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 349.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 372.





affairs of men. When poetry is present in the drama, this form, he says, is then admirable, as are the conducts and habits of men during the same period; when poetry is absent from the drama, the corruption imputed to this form begins, and the conduct and habits of men are likewise corrupt. Thus, Shelley reasons, poetry acts as a moral cause, while social conditions are the effect of this cause.

Turning to history again for illustrations and evidence, Shelley says that the drama at Athens, or in any other place, "ever<sup>1</sup> co-existed with the moral and intellectual greatness of the age." The Athenian tragedies, he continues, "are as mirrors in which the spectator beholds himself, under a thin disguise of circumstance, stript of all but that ideal perfection and energy which every one feels to be the internal type of all that he loves, admires, and would become."<sup>2</sup> Dramas like these enlarge the imagination--which effect is the result of all great poetry, Shelley has said--they strengthen the affections through the arousing of such emotions as pity, indignation, terror, and sorrow.<sup>3</sup> The exercise of these feelings produces an "exalted calm"; not only that, "even crime is disarmed of half its horror and all its contagion by being represented as the fatal consequence of the unfathomable agencies of nature; error is divested of its wilfulness; men<sup>can</sup> no longer cherish

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 15, ll. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 19-23.

<sup>3</sup>Shelley approaches here the Aristotelian conception of the catharsis induced by the perception of tragedy, although he adds a little to the original idea.



it as the creation of their choice. In the drama of the highest order there is little room for censure or hatred; it reaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect.<sup>1</sup> Self-knowledge is the effect of the drama pointed out by Shelley in his Preface to The Cenci. Any absence of moral idealisms might be compensated for, according to Shelley, by the purging effects of the tragedy as well as the knowledge of the human heart induced by this type of representation. The adhering to human nature has been recommended by Boileau in his treatment of the drama, comedy as well as tragedy; he is not so much concerned, however, with the striving after "ideal perfection and energy" as he is with the practical and realistic aspect of this form of art. This vision of perfectibility, this quest for the ideal, persisted as dominant motives in Shelley's life and thought. The knowledge of the human heart mentioned by Shelley as one of the effects of the drama is an idea found in Sidney's work also: he believes that comedy will open a man's eyes to the nature of his own actions;<sup>2</sup> that tragedy will teach the highest moral lessons—"it were too absurd to cast out so excellent a representation of what<sup>so</sup>ever is most worthy to be learned."<sup>3</sup>

All of the good effects of which the drama is capable will

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 15, ll. 30-37.

<sup>2</sup>Apology, p. 177.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 178, ll. 11-13.



be produced, Shelley says, as long as this form continues to express poetry; it will <sup>h</sup>ten act "as a prismatic and many-sided mirror, which collects the brightest rays of human nature and divides and reproduces them from the simplicity of these elementary forms, and touches them with majesty and beauty, and multiplies all that it reflects, and endows it with the power of propagating its like wherever it may fall." <sup>1</sup> Here he is stressing once more the idea of poetry's containing the highest type of moral idealisms. There is also a suggestion of the way in which he has said high poetry will affect the imagination--enlarging it by adding thoughts of ever new delight, which are multiplied by reason of their power to attract and assimilate to their own nature all other thoughts.

But let there come a period of decay in social life, Shelley continues, and the drama will sympathize with that decay; it will become merely the cold imitation of great masterpieces; it will lack the harmonious accompaniment of the other arts (one of the features of the Athenian drama Shelley admires so much); it will become "a weak attempt to teach certain doctrines, which the writer considers as moral truths; and which are usually no more than specious flatteries of some gross vice or weakness, with which <sup>2</sup> the author, in common with his auditors, are infected." This

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<sup>1</sup>

Defence, p. 16, ll. 2-8.

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., ll. 14-18.





attempt will be contrary to Shelley's warning against the danger of a poet's attempting to inculcate moral ideas directly, especially those of his own time and place. Such an attempt, Shelley says, has resulted in the classical or domestic drama, like Addison's Cato, and will never be successful because it is impossible to make poetry subservient to ignoble or imperfect ends:

"Poetry is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes<sup>1</sup> the scabbard that would contain it." Dramatic writings of this sort, he remarks, display only an affecting of sentiment and passion, which are merely other names for caprice and appetite as these dramas represent them--all this the result of a lack of imagination.<sup>2</sup> The period of greatest degradation of the drama, according to Shelley, was the reign of Charles II, when poems became nothing more than insincere and flattering hymns to his tyranny. "Milton stood alone illuminating an age unworthy of him."<sup>3</sup> This low type of drama, moreover, contains too much of the "calculating principle," which is always at war with genuine poetry. Comedy becomes depraved and loses its universality; for real pleasure and sympathetic merriment there are substituted malignity, sarcasm, and contempt, as well as obscenity, "which is ever blasphemy against the divine beauty in life."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 22-24.

<sup>2</sup>Shelley seems to be referring here to a lack of imagination in both the reader and the author.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 16, ll. 32-33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 17, ll. 3-4.

Both Boileau and Pope, as has been shown, also attack obscenity in works of art.



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In the admiration for Greek art which Shelley has been expressing in this part of the Defence, he is joined by all of the other critics under consideration, with the possible exception of Sidney, who says nothing about Greek literature in general, but shows the highest regard for the work of Plato and is noticeably influenced by the Poetics of Aristotle. Near the end of his De Genealogia Deorum Boccaccio apologizes for his quoting Greek poetry so often, saying that he may be attacked for that reason, but that he has gone to this storehouse of examples because he preferred to draw from the source rather than the stream. Pope's essay is filled with eulogies of the ancients, both Latin and Greek; he says of the latter:

Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites  
 When to repress and when indulge her flights:  
 High on Parnassus' top her sons she show'd,  
 And pointed out those arduous paths they trod;  
 Held from afar, aloft, th' immortal prize,  
 And urged the rest by equal steps to rise.  
 Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n,  
 She drew from them what they derived from Heav'n. 1

In another passage he addresses the ancients directly:

Hail, Bards triumphant! born in happier days,  
 Immortal heirs of universal praise!  
 Whose honours with increase of ages grow,  
 As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;  
 Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,  
 And worlds applaud that must not yet be found! 2

Boileau, like Pope, holds up the ancients as examples for the writ-

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<sup>1</sup> An Essay on Criticism, p. 68, ll. 92-99.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 69, ll. 189-194.



ers of his time, while both of them reiterate their advice to study nature, in other words, to study the interpretation of life and human passions expressed in the works of the old Greek and Roman masters. Boileau, like Shelley more specific and more detailed in his treatment of the drama, gives special attention to the contributions of the Greek Thespis, Aeschylus, and Sophocles. Of the latter he says:

Sophocle enfin, donnant l'essor à son génie,  
 Accrut ancor la pompe, augmenta l'harmonie,  
 Intéressa le chœur dans toute l'action,  
 Des vers trop raboteux polit l'expression,  
 Lui donna chez les Greces cette hauteur divine  
 Où jamais n'atteignit la foiblesse latine. 1

The attitude of all these critics toward Homer will be considered later in connection with what Shelley has to say of the same writer. Enough has been given to show that admiration for Greek art was not confined to any one critic or any one era of criticism.

Shelley follows his criticism of the drama with an explanation of the reasons why he has paid so much attention to this form. It is easy to combine the expression of a great number of modes of poetry in this type, he says; thus it is easier in this kind of representation than in any other to observe the connection between cause and effect, or between poetry and social good. Again Shelley states the conviction that has motivated his entire discussion of the drama: "it is indisputable that the highest perfection of human society has ever corresponded with the highest dramatic

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L'Art Poétique, p. 342.



excellence; and that the corruption or the extinction of the drama in a nation where it has once flourished, is a mark of a corruption of manners, and an extinction of the energies which sustain the soul of social life."<sup>1</sup> This life, however, may be preserved and renewed, Shelley says, if men are found capable of bringing back the drama to its principles.<sup>2</sup> This is true also, Shelley says, of poetry in its more extended sense; "all language, institution and form require not only to be produced but to be sustained: the office and character of a poet participates in the divine nature as regards providence, no less than as regards creation."<sup>3</sup>

Going on with his illustrations from history, Shelley points out that civil wars and conquest were synonymous with the decline of the creative faculty in Greece. The bucolic and erotic writers under the Sicilian and Egyptian tyrants were, he says, the latest representatives of its glory. Their poetry, according to Shelley, lacks harmony, is also too melodious and sweet—a condition "correlative with that softness in statuary, music, and the kindred arts, and even in manners and institutions, which distinguished the epoch to which I now refer."<sup>4</sup> There is found in Homer and Sophocles, he admits, the same influence exerted upon the senses and the affections, but the supremacy of these writers lies in

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 17, ll. 13-19.

<sup>2</sup>Shelley would say with Sidney that it is man's wit that has abused poetry, and not poetry that has abused man's wit.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 17, ll. 24-27.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 18, ll. 5-8.





the presence in their work of "those thoughts which belong to the inner faculties of our nature, not in the absence of those which are connected with the external: their incomparable perfection consists in a harmony of the union of all."<sup>1</sup> The erotic poets, Shelley asserts, are not connected with the corruption of their age inasmuch as they are poets, but only in so far as they are not poets; it is their lack that contributes to their imperfection. If the corruption of their age had been so strong as to extinguish in them all "sensibility to pleasure, passion, and natural scenery...the last triumph of evil would have been achieved. For the end of social corruption is to destroy all sensibility to pleasure; and, therefore, it is corruption."<sup>2</sup> This corruption, Shelley says, begins at the imagination (the great instrument of moral good) and the intellect, then distributes itself like a poison through the whole system. Poetry, however, "ever addresses itself to those faculties which are the last to be destroyed....Poetry ever communicates all the pleasure which men are capable of receiving: it is ever still the light of life; the source of whatever of beautiful or generous or true can have place in an evil time."<sup>3</sup> It contains within itself, Shelley adds, the seeds of its own renovation and that of society. Furthermore, even

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 16-19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 26-30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-19, ll. 35-5.



though the people to whom the bucolic and erotic poetry was addressed were capable of grasping only fragmentary parts of its beauty, those more finely organized or those living in a happier age can recognize these poems "as episodes to that great poem, which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world."<sup>1</sup> Shelley thus conceives of poetry, or the expression of the poetic principle, as an unending chain extending through all time.

The next link of the chain, Shelley finds in Rome, where, he says, the forms of social life "never seem to have been thoroughly saturated with the poetical element."<sup>2</sup> He decides that the Romans hated to compete with the Greeks in "any thing which might bear a particular relation to their own condition, whilst it should bear a general one to the universal constitution of the world."<sup>3</sup> But many of their great poets--Ennius, Varro, Pecuvius--have been lost, Shelley states. Lucretius, though, can be called a poet in the highest sense; Virgil, in a very high sense; "Livy is instinct with poetry."<sup>4</sup> Horace, Catullus, Ovid, and the other writers, Shelley believes, looked upon man and nature as they were reflected in the mirror of Greece; also, the institutions of Rome were less poetical than those of Greece.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 19, ll. 24-26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 29-30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 34-37.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 20, l. 7.



For these reasons poetry in Rome seemed to follow rather than accompany "the perfection of political and domestic society."<sup>1</sup> Thus, Shelley concludes, "The true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions..."<sup>2</sup> The genius of Rome was the effect of the operation of the imagination, which beheld the beauty of a certain rhythm and order in the spectacle of life, and "created it out of itself according to its own idea; the consequence was empire, and the reward everlasting fame."<sup>3</sup> These creations, Shelley says, "are not the less poetry, quia carent vate sacro."<sup>4</sup> According to his more extended definition of the term they are worthy of the title just as much as those productions warranting the name in the more restricted sense. "They are the episodes of that cyclic poem written by Time upon the memories of man."<sup>5</sup>

Critical opinions of Latin poetry are found in the works of the other critics also. Boccaccio, like Shelley, avers its inferiority to the Greek, saying that the Latin language "would gain much through an alliance with the Greek," and that he has always endeavored to cultivate Greek poetry among the Tuscans.<sup>6</sup> Sidney says little concerning Latin poetry in general, but re-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 14-15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 27-29.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 29-30.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., ll. 30-32.

<sup>6</sup>G. G. 15. 7.





fers to Virgil as one of the examples to be followed in the  
<sup>1</sup>  
 writing of eclogues. Pope and Boileau wrote at a time when  
 the influence of Horace was strong, and both owe much to this  
<sup>2</sup>  
 critic. Pope says of him:

Horace still charms with graceful negligence,  
 And without method talks us into sense;  
 Will, like a friend, familiarly convey  
 The truest notions in the easiest way. 3

Pope also pays attention to Virgil, although he looks upon  
 Homer as the master of the Latin writer, saying:

When first young Maro in his boundless mind  
 A work t'outlast immortal Rome design'd,  
 Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law,  
 And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw;  
 But when t'examine ev'ry part he came,  
 Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.  
 Convinced, amazed, he checks the bold design,  
 And rules as strict his labour'd work confine  
 As if the Stagyrte o'er look'd each line. 4

In his discussion of the eclogue Boileau gives equal praise to  
<sup>5</sup>  
 Theocritus and Virgil. He commends Tibullus for his treatment  
 of the elegy and du tendre Ovide for his masterful handling of  
<sup>6</sup>  
 this form of poetry. He shows the debt owed by the madrigal to

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<sup>1</sup> Apology, p. 196, ll. 18-21.

<sup>2</sup> One difference between the critical work of Shelley, as shown  
 in the Defence, and that of the Neo-Classicists, is the compara-  
 tive absence from the former of the name or influence of Horace.  
 Shelley mentions Horace only once, and then merely to remark that  
 he was one of the Latin poets who went to the Greeks for his models.

<sup>3</sup> An Essay on Criticism, p. 76, ll. 94-97.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 69, ll. 130-139.

<sup>5</sup> L'Art Poétique, p. 312.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 314 and 315.





Lucilla, Horace, and Persius.<sup>1</sup> He says that the satires of Juvenal Étincellent...de sublimes beautés...<sup>2</sup> He remarks that R gnier of<sup>3</sup> in the better part of his work was a disciple ces ma tres savants. Boileau is much more detailed in his treatment of Roman writers than any of the other critics referred to here and mentions more of them. In his consideration of the drama, however, to which he pays most attention, he speaks of the hauteur divine of the Greek productions as contrasted to la foiblesse latine.<sup>4</sup>

Practically all of the critics, in fact, give highest praise to Greek poetry and relegate Latin, or at least some phases of it, to an inferior position. Shelley, however, by broadening his definition, finds more poetry in Rome than the others, using the term in its more restricted sense. Shelley feels that the institutions of Rome contained the poetical element, that they showed the results of the operation of the imagination, and are therefore entitled to be called poetry. Pope refers to the Romans' growth of empire, but does not identify any of its phases or causes with the poetical element, saying:

Learning and Rome alike in empire grew,  
And arts still follow'd where her eagles flew;  
From the same foes at last both felt their doom,  
And the same age saw learning fall and Rome. 5

His idea of the arts' accompanying the expansion of Rome's politi-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 327-328.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 342.

<sup>5</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 76, ll. 124-127.



cal and domestic system is similar to that of Shelley when the latter is referring to Roman poetry in the more restricted sense of the word.

Passing now from Rome to the centuries following, Shelley says that the world, during this period of transition from ancient times to modern, would have fallen into utter chaos had it not been for the "poets among the authors of the Christian and chivalric systems of manners and religion, who created forms of opinion and action never before conceived; which, copied into the imagination of men, became as generals to the bewildered armies of their thoughts."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Shelley maintains, no portion of the evil that may have resulted from these systems can be attributed to the poetry found in them. Pope says of the times that came after the fall of Rome:

With tyranny then superstition join'd,  
As that the body, this enslaved the mind;  
Much was believ'd, but little understood,  
And to be dull was construed to be good. 2

The passage is interesting in the similarity of attitude toward superstitions shown by both Pope and Shelley.

It is probable, Shelley continues, that Jesus himself and his disciples felt the salutary effect of the poetry contained in the writings of Moses, Job, David, Solomon, and Isaiah, because the fragments that have been preserved of the writings of Jesus--"this

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 21, ll. 1-6.

<sup>2</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 76, ll. 128-130.



extraordinary person," Shelley calls him—"are all instinct<sup>1</sup> with the most vivid poetry." Boccaccio also associates poetry with the words of Jesus: in his refutation of charges brought against this art he bases much of his defense on the ground that one method of composing "stories,"<sup>2</sup> that which "superficially mingles fiction with truth," was used by the most ancient poets, "whose object it has been to clothe in fiction divine and human matters alike,"<sup>3</sup> and was the method employed throughout practically all the New Testament; that another method, more like history than fiction except that the events portrayed are such as might have occurred at some time, was the one often used by Christ, in the form of the parable or exemplum.<sup>4</sup> Boileau says nothing of the poetical element present in the words of Jesus or his disciples, but does express his belief that poets should not make use of the themes provided by Christianity:

C'est donc bien vainement que nos auteurs déçus,  
 Bannissant de leurs vers ces ornements reçus,  
 Pensent faire agir Dieu, ses saints et ses prophètes,  
 Comme ces dieux éclos du cerveau des poètes;  
 Mettent à chaque pas le lecteur en enfer;  
 N'offrent rien qu'Astaroth, Belzébuth, Lucifer.  
 De la foi d'un chrétien les mystères terribles  
 D'ornements égayés ne sont point susceptibles:  
 L'Evangile à l'esprit n'offre de tous côtés  
 Que pénitence à faire, et tourments mérités;  
 Et de vos fictions le mélange coupable  
 Même à ses vérités donne l'air de la fable. 5

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 21, ll. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup>Boccaccio is here dealing with the idea of fiction prevalent during the Middle Ages.

<sup>3</sup>G. G. 14. 9, 48.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>L'Art Poétique, pp. 356-357.





The doctrines of Jesus, Shelley says, soon became distorted. "At a certain period after the prevalence of a system of opinions founded upon those promulgated by him, the three forms into which Plato had distributed the faculties of mind<sup>1</sup> underwent a sort of apotheosis, and became the object of the worship of the civilized world."<sup>2</sup> The result was confusion. Yet--and here Shelley shows his belief in the inherent capability of man to progress toward perfectibility--the world emerged from this chaos and resumed its upward flight, poetry acting as the invisible guide. "Listen to the music, unheard by outward ears, which is as a ceaseless and invisible wind, nourishing its everlasting course with strength and swiftness."<sup>3</sup>

It was the poetry, Shelley repeats, in the doctrines of Jesus as well as in the mythology and institutions of the Celtic conquerors of Rome that outlived the darkness and the chaos, "and blended themselves in a new fabric of manners and opinions."<sup>4</sup> The ignorance of the dark ages, he says, could never be attributed to the Christian doctrines or to the predominance of the Celtic nations. "Whatever of evil their agencies may have contained sprang from the extinction of the poetical principle, connected with the progress of despotism and superstition."<sup>5</sup> Men became insensible and selfish, the victims of fear, avarice, cruelty, and fraud; nat-

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<sup>1</sup>The image of the charioteer and his steeds has been interpreted by Mr. Benjamin Jowett to be symbolical of the threefold division of psychology--reason, desire, and the moral or spiritual sense. (Works of Plato, vol. III, p. 372.)

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 21, ll. 17-22.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 28-31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 22, ll. 4-6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., ll. 8-11.



urally no one was found among such a people who possessed the ability to create "in form, language, or institution."<sup>1</sup> Here is another proof, then, according to Shelley, that the extinction of poetry coexists with an age of decay in social habits and manners.

Moreover, the effects of the Christian and chivalric poetry were not seen until the eleventh century; among the results, Shelley says, was the abolition of personal and domestic slavery as well as the partial emancipation of women. The source of the abolishing of slavery, Shelley traces to Plato, referring to the Republic, where, he says, the principle of equality was discovered and applied by its author: in this work there may be seen the writer's idea of a distribution of the materials of pleasure and power, such distribution to be determined by the sensibility of each person, or the good effects produced upon all. Furthermore, Shelley declares, Plato, following Timaeus and Pythagoras, "taught also a moral and intellectual system of doctrine, comprehending at once the past, the present, and the future condition of man."<sup>2</sup> These ideas were carried on by Jesus, who "divulged the sacred and eternal truths contained in these views to mankind, and Christianity, in its abstract purity, became the exoteric expression of the esoteric doctrines of the poetry and wisdom of antiquity."<sup>3</sup> Also, the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., l. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 22-23, ll. 35-1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 23, ll. 1-5.

There might be some reason for saying that Shelley here fuses the teachings of Plato and of Christ.



Celtic nations impressed upon the peoples whom they conquered "the figure of the poetry existing in their mythology and institutions."<sup>1</sup> The result was a sum of action and reaction because the Celts also incorporated into themselves--as is often the case with conquerors--a part of what they superseded. All through this paragraph Shelley is associating the progress of poetry with the progress of ideas.

Considering the partial freedom of women which resulted, Shelley has stated, from an operation of the poetic principle, he says that this emancipation produced the poetry of sexual love. "Love became a religion, the idols of whose worship were ever present."<sup>2</sup> Love acted as did poetry, Shelley remarks, making familiar things "wonderful and heavenly, and a paradise was created as out of the wrecks of Eden."<sup>3</sup> In fact, this very creation is poetry, Shelley says; "its creators were poets; and language was the instrument of their art..."<sup>4</sup> Following the "Provençal Trouveurs" was Petrarch, "whose verses are as spells, which unseal the inmost enchanted fountains of the delight which is in the grief of love."<sup>5</sup> Applying the principle mentioned before of one's identifying oneself with that which one admires, Shelley remarks: "It is impossible to feel them [Petrarch's verses] without becoming a portion of that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 26-28.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 29-30.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., ll. 32-34.

The expression here of admiration for Petrarch would have pleased Boccaccio, who compliments his master highly in the De Genealogia Deorum.





beauty which we contemplate..."<sup>1</sup> Such an emotion "can render men more amiable, more generous and wise, and lift them out of the dull vapours of the little world of self."<sup>2</sup> In other words, a reading of poetry will enlarge the imagination—an effect which Shelley has attributed to it before.

Dante, however, Shelley says, understood the secret things of love even more than Petrarch. "His Vita Nuova is an inexhaustible fountain of purity and sentiment and language; it is the idealized history of that period, and those intervals of his life which were dedicated to love."<sup>3</sup> Shelley continues his praise: "His apotheosis to Beatrice in Paradise, and the gradations of his own love and her loveliness, by which as by steps he feigns himself to have ascended to the throne of the Supreme Cause, is the most glorious imagination of modern poetry."<sup>4</sup> It is interesting

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 23, ll. 34-36. See also Adonais, 43. 36-37. Shelley's idealistic trend of mind can be noted over and over again in the Defence; it is always the beautiful, the good, with which the reader of poetry identifies himself.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 24, ll. 1-3. It is quite possible that, in his stress on love and its power, Shelley has been influenced by Plato, who, in the opinion of Mr. Atkins (op. cit., p. 63) "makes use of what was probably a commonplace at the time, that love was a prime source and inspiration of poetry: and in this connexion he quotes the dictum of Euripides that 'at the touch of love everyone becomes a poet, though incapable of poetry before.'" Part of the Symposium, in which this dictum appears, had been translated by Shelley before he began the Defence.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 24, ll. 4-8.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 8-12. Shelley's admiration for Plato may have had some influence in his singling out this image for special praise. Plato, according to Mr. Atkins (op. cit., p. 53), "describes in some detail the flight of the soul of the inspired lover towards those changeless realities to which it is by nature akin."





to note that it is the imagination of Dante, as well as his understanding of love, on which Shelley lays stress--an attitude consistent with what he has said before concerning poetry and its effects.

This poetry of love, Shelley never seems to tire of praising, saying that Plato alone, among all the ancients, extolled love in a worthy manner, and that this force "has been celebrated by a chorus of the greatest writers of the renovated world, and the music has penetrated the caverns of society, and its echoes still drown the dissonance of arms and superstition."<sup>1</sup> As illustrations of the later writers he mentions Ariosto, Tasso, Shakespeare, Spenser, Calderon, and Rousseau, as well as the authors generally of his own age, all of whom, he says, were able to achieve with their poetry "that sublimest victory over sensuality and force."<sup>2</sup> Shelley also maintains that the decrease in misunderstanding of the true relations between the sexes is due "to the worship of which chivalry was the law, and poets the prophets."<sup>3</sup> Thus the poetry of the transitional period was, according to Shelley, vindicated by its effects.

An interesting thing in connection with this point is the

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 24, ll. 18-22.

Shelley enlists poetry on his side in the battle that he wages so vigorously against superstition, joined here with another thing that he hated, war.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 24, ll. 26-27.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 33-35.



fact that the critic who, of those considered in this chapter, has, next to Shelley, the most to say about love is Boileau. In his discussion of the elegy and its characteristics he remarks to authors that, in order to express the caprices heureux of this form of poetry, C'est peu d'être poète, il faut être amoureux.<sup>1</sup> He continues:

Je hais ces vains auteurs, dont la muse forcée  
M'entretient de ses feux, toujours froide et glacée;  
Qui s'affligent par art, et, fous de sens rassis,  
S'érigent, pour rimer, en amoureux transis.  
Leurs transports les plus doux ne sont que phrases vaines:  
Ils ne savent jamais que se charger de chaînes,  
Que bénir leur martyre, adorer leur prison,  
Et faire quereller les sens at la raison.  
Ce n'étoit pas jadis sur ce ton ridicule  
Qu'Amour dictoit les vers que soupiroit Tibulle,  
Ou que, du tendre Ovide animant les doux sons,  
Il donnoit de son art les charmantes leçons.  
Il faut que le coeur seul parle dans l'élégie. 2

Boileau writes of love again in his treatment of the drama:

Je ne sais pas pourtant de ces tristes esprits  
Qui, bannissant l'amour de tous chastes écrits,  
D'un si riche ornement veulent priver la scène,  
Traitent d'empoisonneurs et Rodrigue et Chimène.  
L'amour le moins honnête, exprimé chastement,  
N'excite point en nous de honteux mouvement. 3

Speaking of the growth of the drama, he remarks:

Bientôt l'amour, fertile en tendres sentiments,  
S'empara du théâtre, ainsi que ses romans.  
Du cette passion la sensible peinture  
Est pour aller<sup>au</sup> coeur la route la plus sûre. 4

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<sup>1</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 313-315.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 388-389.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 345.



It is true, of course, that Boileau, in all of these passages, is advising authors of different types of poetry to keep as close as possible to the type and to copy nature as much as <sup>is</sup> in their power; there is, however, an emphasis on feeling that would not have been unusual in a Romantic.

Sidney mentions love briefly, in his discussion of the lyric; he complains that, though many of these writings "come vnder the banner of vnresistable loue,"<sup>1</sup> they are too cool to move the reader, because the authors themselves do not feel the passions they are trying to express, and thus "wee misse the right vse of the materiall point of Poësie."<sup>2</sup> His point of view is similar to that of Boileau; both critics feel that it is essential for an author himself to feel the emotion that he is endeavoring to express.

Returning to Dante, Shelley says that his poetry is like a bridge spanning the abyss between ancient and modern times. Both he and Milton, however, Shelley remarks, have found it necessary to veil the splendor of their original conceptions, and express "distorted notions of invisible things..."<sup>3</sup> Because of the dif-

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<sup>1</sup>Apology, p. 201, ll. 21-22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 32-33.

Sidney is here stressing the point which, throughout his Apology, he seems to feel is fundamental in all good poetry--its power to move. In spite of the arguments which he has carefully constructed to appease the censors of his age, the poet in him cannot but emphasize the delight that poetry will give.

<sup>3</sup>Defence, p. 25, ll. 1-2.





ference existing between the sublimity of their ideas and the apprehension of their readers, such a cloak is necessary. Dante, Shelley feels, was conscious of this difference. Milton, too, could not subordinate poetry to popular conceptions of right and wrong. His Paradise Lost contains "within itself a philosophical refutation of that system of which, by a strange and natural antithesis,<sup>1</sup> it has been a chief popular support." The magnificent and energetic portraiture of Satan could never, Shelley says,<sup>2</sup> "have been intended for the popular personification of evil." Shelley's judgment is that this figure is great poetically, and "as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture, is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy, not from any mistaken notion of inducing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity, but with the alleged design<sup>3</sup> of exasperating him to deserve new torments." Shelley praises Milton for daring to write genuine poetry instead of inculcating in his verse the precepts of a narrow, Puritanic creed which would have insisted upon the superiority of the god to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 12-15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 18-19.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 26-33.



the devil being shown plainly, regardless of any poetic principles. "And this bold neglect of a direct moral purpose is the most decisive proof," Shelley asserts, "of the supremacy of Milton's genius."<sup>1</sup> Milton perceived the way in which poetry should operate: "He mingled as it were the elements of human nature as colours upon a single palette, and arranged them in the composition of his great picture according to the laws of epic truth, that is, according to the laws of that principle by which a series of actions of the external universe and of intelligent and ethical beings is calculated to excite the sympathy of succeeding generations of mankind."<sup>2</sup> Both Milton's great work and that of Dante, Shelley says, "have conferred upon modern mythology a systematic form..."<sup>3</sup> And after many generations have passed from the earth, "commentators will be learnedly employed in elucidating the religion of ancestral Europe, only not utterly forgotten because it will have been stamped with the eternity of genius."<sup>4</sup>

Dante, the second epic poet--Homer was the first--showed, Shelley continues, the universality of conception and the keenness of apprehension necessary in a great poet, for his crea-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26, ll. 36-1.

What Shelley says here with regard to Milton's method of writing is consistent with what he has already described as the way in which the highest type of poetry will be produced.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 26, ll. 2-9.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 10-11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ll. 13-16.



tions "bore a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived, and of the ages which followed it: developing itself in correspondence<sup>1</sup> with their development." He was, Shelley says, superior to Lucretius, who "had limed the wings of his swift spirit in the dregs of the sensible world..."<sup>2</sup> He was also superior to Virgil, who, "with a modesty that ill became his genius, had affected the fame of an imitator, even whilst he created anew all that he copied..."<sup>3</sup>

Repeating a point that he has considered before, Shelley says that both Dante and Milton were "deeply penetrated with the ancient religion of the civilized world..."<sup>4</sup> Dante's influence was especially great, Shelley feels; he was "the first religious reformer..."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, he was not only "the first awakener of entranced Europe; he created a language, in itself music and persuasion, out of a chaos of inharmonious barbarisms."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 19-22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 23-24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 24-26.

The attitude of Pope on this matter is slightly different; he praises Virgil for the wisdom this writer showed in imitating Homer.

<sup>4</sup>Defence, p. 26, ll. 36-37.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 27, ll. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., ll. 8-10.

This might suggest Shelley's acquaintance with the De Vulgari Eloquentia.





He was, Shelley remarks, essentially a poet: "His very words are instinct with spirit; each is as a spark, a burning atom of inextinguishable thought..."<sup>1</sup> Such an appreciation of Dante as that expressed by Shelley in the Defence was not common among Englishmen.<sup>2</sup>

Nor is it found in the works of the other critics being considered here. In Books XIV and XV of his De Genealogia Deorum Boccaccio reserves his praise for Petrarch, who was his master and contemporary; Boccaccio was only eight years of age when Dante died. Sidney makes no mention of Dante. Boileau says nothing concerning him in L'Art Poétique. Pope, in his Essay on Criticism, sings the praises of Vida, calling him the "Immortal Vida!" but remains silent on the subject of Dante.

The same is true of Milton, whom Shelley extols so highly. Boileau and Milton were contemporaries, but it is of living French authors that Boileau writes in his critical work, paying no attention to the Englishman, even in his discussion of the epic. One reason was probably the fact that Milton was English; another may very well have <sup>been</sup> ~~did~~ that Milton did something disapproved of by Boileau, that is, used in his great work the themes provided by Christianity. Pope, however, has nothing to

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 27, ll. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. R. W. King remarks (in "Italian Influence on English Scholarship and Literature during the Romantic Revival," MLR, vol. 21, pp. 24-33) that Shelley "had a far greater comprehension of the genius of Byron than Dante, or indeed than any other English poet..." Also, "his few translations from Dante's lyrics surpass all similar attempts except Rossetti's, and he was the first Englishman, after Cary, to state a definite preference for the Purgatorio and Paradiso over the Inferno."





say concerning Milton--one has to remember, of course, that in the age of Pope Milton was largely ignored.

It is an entirely different matter with Homer. Boileau and Pope and Shelley meet on common ground in their praise of this writer, as they do in their appreciation of Greek literature in general. Considering the worship of the ancients by the men of the Neo-Classical era, it is not surprising to find in the works of two of their most eminent representatives such passages as the following:

On diroit que pour plaire, instruit par la nature,  
Homère ait a Vénus dérobé sa ceinture.  
Son livre est d'agréments un fertile trésor:  
Tout ce qu'il touché se convertit en or.  
Tout reçoit dans ses mains une nouvelle grâce;  
Partout il divertit et jamais il ne lasse.  
Une heureuse chaleur anime ses discours:  
Il ne s'égare point en de trop longs détours.  
Sans garder dans ses vers un ordre méthodique,  
Son sujet de soi-même et s'arrange et s'explique;  
Tout, sans faire d'appréts, s'y prépare aisément;  
Chaque vers, chaque mot court à l'événement.  
Aimez donc ses écrits, mais d'un amour sincère;  
C'est avoir profité que de savoir s'y plaire. 1

Be Homer's works your study and delight,  
Read them by day, and meditate by night;  
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,  
And trace the Muses upward to their spring. 2

The interesting thing is that Shelley, of a new era, keeps Homer--and discards Horace.

After commenting briefly on the age succeeding that of Dante--

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<sup>1</sup>L'Art Poétique, pp. 366-368.

<sup>2</sup>An Essay on Criticism, pp. 68-69, ll. 124-127.



the revival of art--and saying that Chaucer sought his "sacred inspiration" from this source, which became the foundation of English literature, Shelley concludes the historical part of his essay, stating that he does not wish to "be betrayed from a defense into a critical history of poetry and its influence on society."<sup>1</sup> He gives a summary of what he has attempted to do so far, saying that it is "enough to have pointed out the effects of poets, in the large and true sense of the word, upon their own and all succeeding times."<sup>2</sup>

He now proceeds to a consideration of specific arguments against poetry. It is true that, in the portions of the Defence preceding this part, he has endeavored to vindicate poetry on the ground of its morality and its beneficent effects upon society; now, for the first time, he takes cognizance of a direct attack on his art and answers the charges brought against it. His essay is different from the other two defenses being considered in that his direct reply to antagonists is confined to the subject of the utility of poetry, whereas both Boccaccio and Sidney deal directly with a greater number of objections to verse.

Boccaccio answers the ignorant by saying that "only a rascal can win a rascal's praise";<sup>3</sup> those who have a smattering of

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<sup>1</sup> Defence, p. 27, ll. 35-36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 27-28, ll. 37-32.

<sup>3</sup> G. G. 14. 2, 19.



<sup>1</sup> knowledge by telling them to go to school and study more. The  
 lawyers of his day, who admit that poetry is a pretty thing but  
 yields no profits, he answers by making a plea for poetry's be-  
<sup>2</sup> ing judged by other than material standards. He then answers  
 the objections of the erudite formalists. Poetry, he maintains,  
<sup>3</sup> is a useful art; he gives what he considers are its effects.  
<sup>4</sup> Also, it is useful rather than damnable to compose stories: fic-  
 tion is not superficial; it was used by the ancient poets and  
<sup>5</sup> Holy Writ; it is powerful in its effects. He asserts that the  
 poets do convey a meaning beneath the surface of their fiction;  
 that if this meaning seems obscure, so are the philosophers often  
 and Holy Writ--furthermore, the reason for the obscurity may be  
 the ignorance of the reader or the fact that it is necessary at  
<sup>6</sup> times for the poet to veil the truth. The poets are not liars,  
<sup>7</sup> nor does the veiling of the truth put them in this category.  
<sup>8</sup> Poetry--the best kind--is never immoral. The reading of good

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 3.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 14. 4.

<sup>3</sup>G. G. 14. 6-7.

<sup>4</sup>Mr. Saintsbury contends (see A History of Criticism, vol. I, p. 464) that Boccaccio is "really pleading pro doma sua--for the status and craft of the story-teller generally, not of the poet as such..."

<sup>5</sup>G. G. 14. 9.

<sup>6</sup>G. G. 14. 10-12.

<sup>7</sup>G. G. 14. 13.

<sup>8</sup>G. G. 14. 14.





poetry has definite values;<sup>1</sup> it is beneficial to read it, and not a deadly sin; the pagan poets did the best they could according to the light they had, and the Christian poets are safe to read as long as they abide by "Catholic Truth."<sup>2</sup> Plato would not have banished the really fine poets from his Republic,<sup>3</sup> nor did Boethius intend to impugn the honorable Muses, only the "drabs of the stage."<sup>4</sup>

The objections to poetry that Sidney answers, those made by the "smyling raylers,"<sup>5</sup> are four in number. First of all, Sidney asserts, poetry is a profitable knowledge; there never was a more fruitful one because poetry "teacheth and moueth to vertue..."<sup>6</sup> Second, the poet does not lie, as his enemies allege, because he never affirms, and thus he never lies; he portrays what should be rather than what was; he invents stories which everybody knows to be imaginative.<sup>7</sup> Third, poetry is not the nurse of abuse and does not seduce its readers to wickedness or weakness; it is men's wit that has abused poetry, and not poetry that has abused men's wit;<sup>8</sup> only the ignorant say that poetry does not incite to manly action. Fourth, Plato, who really honored poetry, objected to the abuse

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 16.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 14. 18.

<sup>3</sup>G. G. 14. 19.

<sup>4</sup>G. G. 14. 20.

<sup>5</sup>Apology, p. 182, l. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 184, l. 11.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 185, ll. 1-26.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 186-188.



rather than the right use of verse, and would not drive out the  
<sup>1</sup>  
 good poets, but banish only the bad.

Although Shelley answers specifically only one definite objection, that based on the ground of utility, the three defenses are more nearly alike in their replies than they appear to be on the surface. All of the Defence up to the twenty-eighth page has been concerned with showing the nature of poetry and pointing out the beneficent effects upon society produced by this art, the latter idea receiving the primary stress. In these pages Shelley has covered in his own way practically all of the points listed by the other two critics, with the exception of the objections that the poets do not abide by "Catholic Truth," that Plato banished the poets from his Republic, and that the poets are liars. The first of these, made by the erudite formalists of Boccaccio's time, Shelley would not, in his age, be likely to consider. The second, he does not consider specifically, although he does, as has been suggested, base many of his ideas concerning the nature and the value of poetry on the philosophy of Plato--the Plato of the Phaedrus and the Symposium rather than the Republic--in addition to giving this philosopher unqualified praise because of the poetry that is inherent in his work. The third, another formal objection of the Middle Ages, still appearing in Sidney's essay,

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., pp. 190-193.



Shelley would have disdained to consider if it had ever occurred to him. The high opinion he holds of the poets and their art, expressed throughout the Defence, would preclude his ever thinking that they could be liars.

The argument of utility, Shelley says, has been alleged against poetry, the opponents of this art maintaining that poetry may be all right as an exercise of the imagination, but that the practice of reason is more useful.<sup>1</sup> One must define the terms used, Shelley replies, particularly "utility." He admits that pleasure, or good, in a general sense, is sought and acquiesced in by any intelligent being. But, he explains, there are really two kinds of pleasure: the one, permanent and universal; the other, transitory and particular. "Utility may either express the means of producing the former or the latter."<sup>2</sup> As far as utility in the former sense is concerned, "whatever strengthens and purifies the affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit to sense, is useful."<sup>3</sup> In the more limited sense, however, utility may be confined in meaning "to express that which banishes the importunity of the wants of our animal nature, the surrounding men with security of life, the dispersing the grosser delusions of superstition, and the conciliating such a degree

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<sup>1</sup>This sounds very much like a modern version of the old conflict between poetry and philosophy, to which Sidney devotes so much attention. Shelley reaches the same goal as Sidney, although the two do not travel the same path.

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 28, ll. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ll. 15-17.



of mutual forbearance among men as may consist with the motives  
of personal advantage."<sup>1</sup>

Shelley admits the value and the necessity of the work done by those who attempt to promote utility in the narrower sense of the term, as long as they make a proper subordination of the inferior powers of man's nature to the superior. Yet even the work of the skeptic, who endeavors to destroy gross superstitions, may have its dangers, Shelley warns: "let him spare to deface, as some of the French writers have defaced, the eternal truths<sup>2</sup> characterized upon the imaginations of men." He also warns the "mechanist" and the political economist: "let them beware that their speculations, for want of correspondence with those first principles which belong to the imagination, do not tend, as they have in modern England, to exasperate at once the extremes of luxury and want."<sup>3</sup> Shelley is here meeting the utilitarian on his own ground, flinging back the challenge at him. The so-called progress of science and political economy did not mean to Shelley what it meant to their enthusiasts; he had come into too close contact with suffering and want to accept, without many reservations, the ideas of the industrialists. Growing poverty, growing wealth, accompanied by a further separation of the clas-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 18-24.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 33-36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29, ll. 37-4.





ses in England--these were, to Shelley, "the effects which must ever flow from an unmitigated exercise of the calculating faculty."<sup>1</sup>

Turning now to the more permanent and universal pleasure, that "in its highest sense," Shelley remarks that it is difficult to define this type. Because of the peculiar composition of man's nature inferior pleasures seem frequently to be mingled with superior. Sometimes an approximation to the highest good may be expressed by such emotions as sorrow, terror, anguish, despair; the principle underlying the effect of tragedy is that it "delights by affording a shadow of that pleasure which exists in pain."<sup>2</sup> Even the sweetest melody will often be inseparable from pain. "The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself."<sup>3</sup> There are some pleasures, however, that are often quite unalloyed, these being: "The delight of love and friendship, the ecstasy of the admiration of nature, the joy of the perception and still more of the creation of poetry..."<sup>4</sup>

Relating this discussion of pleasure to utility, Shelley

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 29, ll. 10-12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ll. 21-22.

The psychologist in Shelley is speaking again.

<sup>3</sup> Defence, p. 29, ll. 24-25.

In his discussion of comedy Sidney says (Apology, p. 200, ll. 9-10) that a person is sometimes "rather pained than delighted with laughter."

Once more, Plato must be mentioned; as Mr. Atkin remarks (op. cit., p. 56), Plato "conceives of the existence of 'mixed feelings' in human nature; a whole range of emotions--anger, fear, malice, and the like--which, though painful in character, were not devoid of pleasure when freely indulged."

<sup>4</sup> Defence, p. 29, ll. 29-31.



says that the production of pleasure in its highest sense is true utility. Poetry does serve the ends of this real utility, he asserts, because the ones "who produce and preserve this<sup>1</sup> pleasure are poets or poetical philosophers." He has said many times before that it is people of this sort who purify the affections and enlarge the imaginations of men. It is true, he admits, that such men as Locke, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau (the latter, he calls in a note essentially a poet), and their disciples deserve the gratitude of mankind because of their efforts to aid distressed humanity and to free men from the dominance of superstition.<sup>2</sup> Yet some improvements, he says, might have come eventually in the moral and intellectual nature of the world if these men had never lived. "But it exceeds all imagination to conceive what would have been the moral condition of the world if neither Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Calderon, Bacon, nor Milton, had ever existed;<sup>3</sup> if Raphael and Michael Angelo had never been born;<sup>4</sup> if the Hebrew poetry had never been translated; if a revival of the study of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., ll. 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley is evidently looking upon these men as those who have promoted utility in what he calls its narrower sense.

<sup>3</sup> Such a list of writers is very interesting, for it shows those for whom Shelley had the highest admiration.

<sup>4</sup> Boccaccio, too, stresses the influence of Hebrew poetry.



Greek literature had never taken place; if no monuments of ancient sculpture had been handed down to us; and if the poetry of the religion of the ancient world had been extinguished together with its belief.<sup>1</sup> It was the poetry in works like these, Shelley maintains, that aroused a desire in men for improvement, that stimulated progress, that promoted utility in the narrower sense even, because it awakened the human mind "to the invention of the grosser sciences, and that application of analytical reasoning to the aberrations of society, which it is now attempted to exalt over the direct expression of the inventive and creative faculty itself."<sup>2</sup> In other words, those who object to poetry on utilitarian grounds are, Shelley suggests, biting the hand that has fed them.

In fact, Shelley continues, there is too much moral and political and historical wisdom, too much economic and scientific knowledge, too much, that is, of theory without practice. This condition is due to the fact that the poetry contained in various systems of thought "is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes."<sup>3</sup> The actual poetry of life is lacking, "the creative faculty to imagine that which we know...the generous

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 30, ll. 11-21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 23-28.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-31, ll. 34-1.





impulse to act that which we imagine..."<sup>1</sup> The cultivation of the mechanical sciences may have made man master over the external world, yet, Shelley asserts, because of the lack of poetry in these systems man has himself remained a slave. Has not the absence of the creative faculty in the mechanical arts, Shelley asks, resulted in "the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labour, to the exasperation of the inequality of mankind?"<sup>2</sup> These arts and sciences have served too much the principle of Self, "of which money is the visible incarnation..."<sup>3</sup> Poetry, with its purifying of the affections, its enlarging of the imagination, its stimulating of love, which, according to Shelley, is the "great secret of morals," serves not Mammon, but God.

In such a fashion does Shelley answer those who assert that poetry does not serve the ends of utility; he takes his fight directly into the camp of the enemy and refutes their ideas at the same time that he attacks the materialistic conceptions of his age, which are, he says, the farthest possible removed from poetry in their nature.<sup>4</sup> "The functions of the poetical faculty," he remarks, "are twofold; by one it creates new materials of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 31, ll. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 18-20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., l. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Perhaps no further proof of the waning influence of Godwin upon Shelley would be needed than the contrast made by Shelley, in the preceding paragraph, between the rationalistic and the poetic systems of thought.



knowledge, and power, and pleasure; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order, which may be called the beautiful and the good."<sup>1</sup> One notices again the consistency in Shelley's point of view; the second function of poetry described here is exactly the same as that which, in an early part of the Defence, he has said is characteristic of the poet's work. Far from being impractical in an age where stress is placed on material things, poetry is, Shelley asserts, more practical than ever at such a time. "The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature. The body has then become too unwieldy for that which animates it."<sup>2</sup>

If poetry were allowed to operate freely, conditions would be different, Shelley believes, for poetry is "the centre and circumference of all knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred."<sup>3</sup> Rationalistic systems, Shelley seems to be saying, can accomplish

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 31, ll. 26-31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 31-36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 32, ll. 1-4.

This point of view is similar to that expressed by Wordsworth, as will be shown in the next chapter.



little without its aid; when poetry, "the root and blossom of all other systems of thought," is "blighted," it "denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life."<sup>1</sup>

What were any of the beautiful things in the world without poetry, Shelley asks--"virtue, love, patriotism, friendship,--what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations this side of the grave--and what were our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar?"<sup>2</sup>

The practical value of poetry is asserted by Boccaccio and Sidney also, both of them, like Shelley, stressing the moral end of verse in their justification of this art. The precise nature of the moral aim varies somewhat with the times during which each author wrote. Boccaccio, for instance, endeavors to show that the reading of poetry will be safe for a good Catholic of his day; that the perusal of the poets, in fact, many of whom are theologians, will bring one closer to the body of revealed religion. The Italian critic is moved to eloquence when he consid-

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., ll. 7-9.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., ll. 14-20.



ers other phases of the practical results of poetry, which, he says, is very powerful: it "can arm kings, marshal them for war, launch whole fleets from their docks, nay, counterfeit sky, land, sea, adorn young maidens with flowery garlands, portray human character in its various phases, awake the idle, stimulate the dull, restrain the rash, subdue the criminal, and distinguish excellent men with their proper meed of praise..."<sup>1</sup> Sidney, as has been shown, emphasizes the idea that poetry is a profitable knowledge because it moves men to virtue, being superior to history in that it not only gives knowledge, but incites the mind to the good; to philosophy in that it not only teaches, but teaches delightfully. Moreover, Sidney continues, the effects of its parts are as beneficent as those of the whole: the pastoral, the elegiac, and the "iambic" influence the human heart to good; satiric poetry makes a man laugh at folly; comedy, though much abused, may when rightly employed open a man's eyes to the nature of his own actions; heroic poetry teaches and moves by the lofty images it presents.<sup>2</sup> Thus, all three of the apologists are convinced of the practical value of poetry, although neither Boccaccio nor Sidney approaches Shelley's philosophic consideration of the true meaning of utility.

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 7, 39-40.

<sup>2</sup>Apology, pp. 176-179.





The contrast that Shelley describes between poetry and the rationalistic sciences is not found in the works of the Neo-Classicists being considered. The chief reason for this is undoubtedly the concept of poetry, familiar in their time, held by both Boileau and Pope. The same qualities of reason, judgment, good sense that characterize their age furnish the criteria by which these men measure poetry; there is no hint in their writings of the antagonism between the poetic and rationalistic systems of thought to which Shelley pays so much attention; in fact, the best poetry is, to them, that which is also synonymous with the best sense; their guiding principle is, as Boileau expresses it, Aimez donc la raison. It is also true, however, that owing to Shelley's broader conception of poetry and the consequent enlarging of his definition of that which is poetic, any satisfactory comparison of his ideas based on this wider point of view with those of others who are adhering to the ordinarily accepted interpretation of the term "poetry" offers difficulties. Also, even in Shelley's critical writings his passionate zeal for reforming the world breaks through; in his discussion of rationalistic systems of thought he holds them to blame for the lack of improvement in society and the still existing misery and



unhappiness among the under-privileged. It is to the poetic element that he turns as a means of bettering conditions; poetry is, to him, a sword of fire that will cleanse the world--through its influence on the individual mind--of its imperfections and dross. This Messianic tendency noticeable in him--and not characteristic of Boileau and Pope--is the reason why Shelley so hotly wages battle against what he considers to be the root of all evil, these same rationalistic systems, not reason per se, nor the ideals of rationality and good sense upheld by the Neo-Classicists in their view of poetry. What Shelley is objecting to is the abuse of reason, its growing to such Gargantuan proportions that there is no room in it for the operation of the poetic element.

As far as the utility of poetry is concerned, the two Neo-Classicists agree with the apologists that poetry serves a useful end, as has been pointed out in another part of this chapter; and this end, a moral one. With this thought there is combined the idea of the pleasure given by this art, a theory to which all of the critics being considered subscribe. Neither Boileau nor Pope, however, any more than is the case with Boccaccio and Sidney, attempts such a definition or explanation of utility as that found in the Defence , or endeavors to



explore the philosophical implications of the term.

Having thus attempted to vindicate his art, both as a logician and a poet, Shelley proceeds to another interesting point. That is, the question of the inspiration of genius, a matter which has caused a great deal of discussion among critics.<sup>1</sup> After what Shelley has said concerning the differences between the poetic and the purely rationalistic systems of thought, and after consideration of the exalted view of poetry expressed consistently throughout the Defence, one is not surprised at the conclusion reached by Shelley on this much debated subject of the inspiration of genius. Since poetry is something divine, it cannot be written, Shelley believes, by sheer effort of will alone, even by the greatest of poets. An art such as this is inspired, he feels, by some

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Atkins says on this point (op. cit., pp. 52-53): "From Homer onwards, poets for their greater glory had claimed to write under the influence of the Muses or the gods, the suggestion being that they were thrown into a state of ecstasy or madness by some divine force from without. In a modified form the doctrine had been emphasized by Pindar; and Plato adopts it for the most part in his writings...He has been shown to dwell mainly on the non-rational conception of the poet's inspiration, on the wild unreason and irresponsible utterance that were among its effects. In the Phaedrus however he gives to the term a deeper meaning, describing it as an influence productive of elevating results that could not have been attained in a state of sanity and normal self-control...It is a sort of intuition, an awakening of latent powers in the poet to a vision of ideal truth; and beyond this as an explanation it is impossible to go far."

Mr. Spingarn remarks (op. cit., p. 156): "the critics of the Renaissance appealed from the Plato of the Republic and the Laws to the Plato of the Ion, the Phaedrus, and the Symposium." Also (op. cit., pp. 196-197): Scaliger, Tasso, and Sidney compare the poet with God, "the great Workman, who made everything out of nothing. The poet is a divinely inspired person, who, sans art, sans scavoir, creates works of divine beauty."





intangible and invisible influence that sweeps over the mind of the creator, fanning the divine spark within him, the consciousness being unaware beforehand of the approach<sup>1</sup> or the departure of this influence.

Mention of this point is made in the works of the other apologists also. Shelley's attitude toward the matter is suggested by Boccaccio's opinion that poetry "proceeds from the bosom of God"; that the fervor which produces it is "sublime in its effects." These words from the De Genealogia Deorum, together with others from the Apology, quoted before in connection with another phase of Shelley's ideas, show the two Renaissance critics very close to Shelley's position, this being particularly true in the case of Sidney. The latter says that the chief poets have been those who "imitated the inconceivable excellencies of GOD"; that it is the "divine breath" of his own Maker which enables the poet to produce his verse. In another part of his essay, where he is discussing the ill repute of the poetry of his time, Sidney remarks that too many are writing poetry who lack the divine gift indispensable for such a work; that a poet can do nothing "if his owne Genius<sup>2</sup> bee not carried vnto it..." The word "Genius" needs interpre-

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<sup>1</sup> Defence, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Apology, p. 195.



tation, of course, but in the light of Sidney's other expressions of opinion it is easy to see what meaning he would attach to the term.

The conception of poetry as the product of inspired genius was revived and nourished by the poets and critics of Shelley's day. In fact, ever since their time the idea has been labeled by many a Romantic concept. In view of this fact and in connection with what Shelley says of the matter, it will be interesting to see what opinions the Neo-Classicists express on the subject. The following six lines are those with which Boileau begins his L'Art Poétique:

C'est en vain qu'au Parnasse un téméraire auteur  
Pense de l'art des vers atteindre la hauteur:  
S'il ne sent point du ciel l'influence secrète,  
Si son astre en naissant ne l'a formé poète,  
Dans son génie étroit il est toujours captif:  
Pour lui Phébus est sourd, et Pégase est rétif. 1

The third line in this quotation is especially significant: du ciel l'influence secrète inevitably suggests the intangible and invisible influence referred to by Shelley, which sweeps over the mind of the creator of poetry. Pope expresses an idea very similar to this:

In Poets as true Genius is but rare,  
True Taste as seldom is the Critic's share:  
Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,  
These born to judge, as well as those to write. 2

It would appear from these quotations that the "light from Heaven"

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<sup>1</sup> L'Art Poétique, pp. 281-283.

<sup>2</sup> An Essay on Criticism, p. 67, ll. 11-14.



is bestowed impartially, on Neo-Classicist and Romanticist alike.

In spite of the similarity, however, which appears between the ideas of Shelley on the inspiration of genius and those expressed by the other critics, there is a pronounced difference in one ramification of this thought. That is Shelley's concept of the way in which the creative genius works after the moment of inspiration has arrived. One thing about this moment, Shelley says, is its lack of durability--the invisible influence wanes: "when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet."<sup>1</sup> This idea is similar in many respects to one Shelley has already expressed in a description of the highest poetry: "Veil after veil may be undrawn, and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed."<sup>2</sup> It may be, according to Shelley, that one reason for this inability of the poet to reveal completely the glory of his original conception is the fact that the divine moments of inspiration are fleeting. Furthermore, Shelley continues, no amount of labor or toil on the part of the poet can recall them; that which he is able to produce when the breath of the invisible<sup>influence</sup> is blowing hottest upon him is always his best work. Shelley then appeals to the greatest poets of his own day for confirmation of this view, asking them if "it is not an error

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<sup>1</sup> Defence, p. 32, ll. 32-36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 27, ll. 20-22.





to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by  
<sup>1</sup>  
 toil and study."

The poetic theory expressed here by Shelley is one with  
<sup>2</sup>  
 which many critics have disagreed. It appears to be a modern  
 statement of one point of view in a very old controversy, the  
 debate as to the relative extent to which art and nature enter

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-33, ll. 37-2.

<sup>2</sup>  
 Dante, for whom Shelley expresses such high admiration, dis-  
 agrees with him on this point; the older critic says: "Poetry and  
 the language proper for it are an elaborate and painful toil."  
 (Scott-James, The Making of Literature, p. 105.) Shelley does ac-  
 knowledge the fact that toil and delay are recommended by the  
 critics, but believes that this means "no more than a careful ob-  
 servation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connexion of  
 the spaces between these suggestions, by the intertexture of con-  
 ventional expressions; a necessity only imposed by the limited-  
 ness of the poetical faculty itself..." (Defence, p. 33, ll. 3-8.)  
 It might be suggested that what Dante says about the nature of  
 poetry and what Shelley says are much different, this difference  
 being the result, to some extent at least, of the dissimilarity  
 in point of view between a mediaeval era and a modern one. Dante's  
 definition of poetry, for instance, is the usual formalistic one  
 characteristic of the Middle Ages; he states that this art is  
 "nothing else than a rhetorical fiction musically arranged."  
 (Saintsbury, Loci Critici, p. 80.) Shelley, in the Defence, speaks  
 of poetry as: "the interpenetration of a diviner nature through  
 our own"(p. 33, ll. 31-32); "the perfect and consummate surface  
 and bloom of all things"(p. 32, ll. 9-10); "the very image of life  
 expressed in its eternal truth"(p. 8, ll. 27-28). The interesting  
 thing here is that what Dante does in poetry is just that which  
 Shelley says in the Defence the greatest poets should do. As has  
 been suggested, Dante, in what he says about poetry, is, in har-  
 mony with the views of his time, much concerned with the form of  
 verse, stressing a great deal the actual expression, while Shelley,  
 representing a point of view more popular in a Romantic age, em-  
 phasizes always the afflatus, the inner spirit. As far as this  
 inner spirit is concerned, Shelley and Dante might be in entire  
 accord--a conclusion suggested by the admiration for Dante found  
 in the Defence.





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into a poet's composition. Shelley, as has been shown, emphasizes the creative force and minimizes labor and pain on the part of the poet.<sup>2</sup> Sidney has also admitted the necessity and the power of genius, saying that a poet can do nothing "if his own Genius bee not carried vnto it..." But the latter feels that art is also essential; he criticizes the poetry of his own time because it is deficient in three qualities necessary for the production of good writing--art, imitation, and exercise.<sup>3</sup> He

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Saintsbury quotes a fragment from Simylus (Locis Critici, p. 32), who lived about 335 B. C., in which this very early critic says: "Nature, will, pains, method--make poets good and wise: number of years bring them nothing but old age." In the stress that Dionysius of Halicarnassus lays on beautiful diction and beautiful composition there is an emphasis on the element of art in a poet's composition. Longinus has much to say concerning the natural creative force within the writer. Horace supports the idea of labor and study, suggesting that the author should not publish in a hurry and recommending hard work on the part of the poet. Vida, among the Renaissance critics, believes that imagination is "to be alloyed with doses of the commonest common sense." (Saintsbury, vol. II, p. 36.) Minturno says that poetry is a matter of both art and inspiration. (Saintsbury, vol. II, p. 53.)

<sup>2</sup> Mr. A. C. Bradley (in Oxford Lectures on English Poetry, "Shelley's View of Poetry," p. 160) says that Shelley speaks in a letter "of the detail of execution destroying all his wild and beautiful visions." Mr. Bradley also remarks that Shelley may be exaggerating this point, the minimizing of the effect of the poet's labor and study, because he is still attacking cold reason and calculation. The same author refers to a fact known by students of Shelley, that the poet's actual practice of his art did not show a minimizing of toil: on his manuscripts there appear various readings; and from his letters, his Journal, as well as the manuscripts themselves, one can reasonably infer that his greatest works "cost him a severe labour not confined to the execution."

<sup>3</sup> Apology, p. 195.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also provides a brief overview of the methodology used in the study. The second part of the paper presents the results of the study, which are discussed in detail in the following sections. The third part of the paper discusses the implications of the study and the conclusions drawn from the research.

Table 1		Table 2		Table 3	
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The table shows the results of the study, which are discussed in detail in the following sections. The table is organized into columns and rows, with the first column representing the study number and the subsequent columns representing the results of the study.

complains that art and imitation are not used correctly in either the matter or the manner of the poetry of his day, although he feels that some works do have "poeticall sinewes" in them. Thus he emphasizes more than is the case with Shelley care in the expression of the poetic idea.

It is between the two Neo-Classical critics and Shelley, however, that there is found the most striking difference of opinion on this point. Although, as has been seen, Boileau and Pope admit the presence in the poet's mind of some divine spark, some "light from Heaven," both of them feel that this is never enough for the production of the greatest work, that there must be a great deal of labor and care on the part of the poet, that art must be joined to the creative force in order that the result be something truly worth while. One might say that it is long this line of cleavage that much of what is called Romantic poetry, and the more truly classical, separate, the exponents of the latter believing with Boileau : Il faut, même en chansons,  
<sup>1</sup>  
du bon sens et de l'art. In his words of caution to poets Boileau expresses plainly his preferences:

Travaillez à loisir, quelque ordre qui vous presse,  
 Et ne vous piquez point d'une folle vitesse;  
 Un style si rapide, et qui court en rimant,  
 Marque moins trop d'esprit que peu de jugement.

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<sup>1</sup>

L'Art Poétique, p. 332.



J'aime mieux un ruisseau qui sur la molle arène  
 Dans un pré plein de fleurs lentement se promène,  
 Qu'un torrent débordé qui, d'un cours orageux,  
 Roule, plein de gravier, sur un terrain fangeux.  
 Hâtez-vous lentement; et, sans perdre courage,  
 Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage:  
 Polissez-le sans cesse et le repolissez;  
 Ajoutez quelquefois, et souvent effacez. 1

If anything more be needed to show the contrast between his ideas on this point of a poet's taking pains with his work and those expressed by Shelley in the Defence, the following quotation will show beyond doubt Boileau's position on the matter:

Un poème excellent, où tout marche et se suit,  
 N'est pas de ces travaux qu'un caprice produit:  
 Il veut du temps, des soins; et ce pénible ouvrage  
 Jamais d'un écolier ne fut l'apprentissage.  
 Mais souvent parmi nous un poète sans art,  
 Qu'un beau feu quelquefois échauffa hasard,  
 Enflant d'un vain orgueil son esprit chimérique,  
 Fièremment prend en main la trompette héroïque:  
 Sa muse dérégée, en ses vers vagabonds,  
 Ne s'élève jamais que par sauts et par bonds:  
 Et son feu, dépourvu de sens et de lecture,  
 S'éteint à chaque pas faute de nourriture. 2

According to Boileau, the "beautiful fire" needs something more than kindling to keep it alive. Like Horace, between whose critical work and his own, there is much similarity, he recommends to the poet care, study, hard work, with many revisions if necessary.

Pope's ideas concerning the point under discussion are the

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Ibid., pp. 304-305.

2

Ibid., p. 368.





same. That the writer must abide by some fixed laws of composition in addition to being fired by the creative spark, Pope suggests in the praise that he gives these laws; the couplet has often been quoted since his day:

Those rules of old, discover'd, not devised,  
Are Nature still, but Nature methodized; 1

The abuse of the idea expressed in the last two words of this couplet was undoubtedly one of the causes of the Romantic rebellion. In another familiar quotation Pope lays emphasis on form:

True Wit is Nature to advantage dress'd,  
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd;  
Something whose truth convinced at sight we find,  
That gives us back the image of our mind. 2

The writer must take pains in order to produce a work that is worth while, Pope says, in what is probably the most famous couplet of his critical work:

True ease in writing comes from Art, not Chance,  
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance. 3

Whatever may have been Shelley's own practice, however much or little he may have followed his own theory, the fact remains that he does say in the Defence that the critics' idea of the poet's having to take labor and pains with his work is an erroneous notion; and his opinion on this point has been shown to be

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<sup>1</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 68, ll. 88-89.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 71, ll. 97-100.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 72, ll. 162-163.



at variance with the thought expressed by several critics, notably the two Neo-Classacists, Boileau and Pope. Probably the important thing as far as Shelley is concerned is that the idea held by him and expressed in the Defence proved true for him, and that it was in accordance with it that he composed some of his successful work. It may very well have been true for him that in the labor of actual composition some of the glow of the original conception faded. His supreme lyrics, one must admit, do seem to be the result of "evanescent visitations of thought and feeling, sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression."<sup>1</sup> In these lyrics, if anywhere, poetry would appear to be the "footsteps...of a wind over the sea, which the morning calm erases, and whose traces remain only, as on the wrinkled sand which paves it."<sup>2</sup> And, as Mr. Bradley remarks, "it may be that the very abstractedness of his ideal was a condition of that quivering intensity of aspiration towards it in which his poetry is unequalled."<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Scott-James makes an interesting comment on this point under discussion: "The view of Shelley and Wordsworth

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<sup>1</sup> Defence, p. 33, ll. 24-28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ll. 32-34.

<sup>3</sup> Oxford Lectures on Poetry, p. 167.



based upon a doctrine of happy inspiration, makes poetry too easy for the poet. Theirs was a theory which dangerously panders to laziness.<sup>1</sup> It may very well be that the writer is referring to Shelley's opinion, expressed in the Defence, that the finest passages of poetry are not produced by toil and study. In the discussion so far of this matter the most rigorous interpretation possible has been made of this opinion: it has been taken to mean that Shelley minimized labor and the taking of pains in the production of a poem, and it is from this point of view that Shelley has been shown to be at variance with other critics, particularly Boileau and Pope. It may be, however, that such a strict interpretation does Shelley an injustice; it may have been his idea that the best parts of a poem were the result of "happy inspiration" rather than arduous labor; he may not have intended to minimize the actual work necessary in the revision or "polishing" of a poem, as Boileau puts it. His own practice would, in the case of some of his productions, bear out the broader interpretation of his remarks. Granted this, however, there would still remain a contrast between his opinion and those expressed by the Neo-Classicists, although the contrast would not be so great as it has

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<sup>1</sup>

The Making of Literature, p. 212.



appeared under the stricter interpretation of his words. Yet, whatever meaning may be ascribed to these remarks of Shelley in the Defence, the conclusion of laziness does not inevitably follow. Furthermore, practically every critic under detailed discussion in this chapter has admitted the power of some outside influence operating upon the poet, this being du ciel l'influence secrète, the "light from Heaven," the "divine breath" of the Poet's Maker," or whatever else the critic may have chosen to call it. If the possession of such a "happy inspiration," as Mr. Scott-James terms it, were conducive to laziness, then the susceptibility to this influence could be looked upon as distinctly a fault; and all poets—at least, all referred to by the five critics who admit this influence—considered defective in nature. Also, those poets whose work showed the greatest amount of inspiration—however this word may be defined—would be the most defective. Such conclusions would appear to be erroneous.

The description that Shelley now enters upon of the characteristics of a poet would tend to show that, in Shelley's opinion at least, something more than laziness is required for the production of work that will be enduring. "Poetry," Shelley says, "is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." <sup>1</sup> Not all can feel these moments

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<sup>1</sup>

Defence, p. 33, ll. 22-23.





of inspiration, he believes; the poetic state is a condition "experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire."<sup>1</sup> Not only are poets, with their refined sensibilities, subject to such experiences, Shelley continues, "but they can colour all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this ethereal world; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion, will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced those emotions, the cold, the buried image of the past."<sup>2</sup> In other words, those<sup>who</sup> can produce poetry are characterized by such a "sensibility"; their work is of such a kind, Shelley says, that it "turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed...It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes: its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., pp. 33-34, ll. 35-2.

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., p. 34, ll. 7-12.



from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty,  
 which is the spirit of its forms.<sup>1</sup> It "defeats the curse which  
 binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impres-  
 sions."<sup>2</sup>

No comment could add to, or take away from, the beauty of these lines; both the inner spirit of Shelley's remarks and the language in which his ideas are clothed are worthy of a poet who, turned critic for the time being, reveals in his work some of the same qualities which, in the actual practice of his art, have made him one of the supreme lyrists of English poetry. It seems appropriate to point out, however, that, in spite of the impassioned nature of this lyric outburst of praise which seems to carry Shelley along on the crest of its wave, there are found in it the same underlying principles that have been expressed by him throughout the Defence concerning the nature of poetry. The face that he turns toward his cherished art is always the same. Poetry is held in honor by the other critics, too, whose work has been discussed, but none of them bestow upon it such ardent and glowing praise as is found in the Defence.

As for the creator of all this imperishable loveliness, it is not to be wondered at that Shelley speaks of him thus: "A poet, as he is the author to others of the highest wisdom,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 23-35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 35, ll. 1-2.

This is the plea of the true Romanticist; poetry can serve as a means of escape from the accidents of life. Plato, in his Phaedrus, speaks of the poetic madness as "a divine release of the soul from the yoke of custom and convention." (Quoted by Mr. Atkins, op. cit., p. 53.) Wordsworth expresses an idea similar to this, as will be shown in the next chapter.



pleasure, virtue, and glory, so he ought personally to be the happiest, the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men. As to his glory, let time be challenged to declare whether the fame of any other institutor of human life be comparable to that of a poet. That he is the wisest, the happiest, and the best, inasmuch as he is a poet, is equally incontrovertible: the greatest poets have been men of the most spotless virtue, of the most consummate prudence, and, if we would look into the interior of their lives, the most fortunate of men: and the exceptions, as they regard those who possessed the poetic faculty in a high yet inferior degree, will be found on consideration to confirm rather than destroy the rule." <sup>1</sup> Shelley

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 35, ll. 15-16.

Shelley's ideas on the nature of the poet, the result of his own deep and sincere convictions, show an interesting similarity to those expressed by many critics of the Renaissance (and it is similarity alone that is being considered here—there is no evidence to show that Shelley read any of these men referred to; therefore their ideas are mentioned not as sources, but as interesting parallels). Francastoro, an early Italian critic, believed that a good poet must be a good man. (Saintsbury, vol. II, p. 45.) But it is Minturno, Mr. Spingarn says, who gave "the first complete expression in modern times of the consecrated conception of the poet's office." (op. cit., p. 53.) Since the poet is, in Minturno's opinion, a teacher of virtue, he must himself be virtuous. Mr. Spingarn remarks that this conception of the poet is found in the French critic, Ronsard, "and is insisted on by Jonson, Milton, Shaftesbury, Coleridge, and Shelley." (op. cit., p. 45.) Mr. Spingarn feels, moreover, that this conception goes back to Strasbo, who said in his Geography "that it is impossible he should be a great and worthy poet who is not first a worthy and good man." (op. cit., p. 55.) The attitude of the twentieth century toward the poet shows a difference, which may be noted in Mr. Spingarn's own description of him, as given in Creative Criticism.





concludes his eulogy of the poet with the words of Tasso: Non<sup>1</sup>  
marita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta.

Those who disagree with Shelley's premises will not, of course, be able to accept his conclusions; his view of the poet is a logical outgrowth of his exalted conception of poetry. It will be interesting to compare his ideas on the nature of the poet with those of the other critics being considered. Boccaccio asserts that, although the poets may be poor in wordly goods,<sup>2</sup> they are rich in peace and tranquillity; that they are prone to contemplation, thus preferring lonely haunts--the country, the<sup>3</sup> mountains, and the woods; that they are eminently truthful;<sup>4</sup> that there ere the honorable among poets whom Plato would not<sup>5</sup> have banished; that many of the poets have been theologians,<sup>6</sup> and clothed moral teachings in the "investiture of fiction." The high opinion of the poets expressed here is similar in the fundamentals to that held by Shelley, except that Shelley, with his dislike of institutionalized and formalized Christianity, would probably have distrusted a poet turned theologian. Boccaccio also goes into a detailed account of the acquirements

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 35, ll. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>G. G. 14. 4.

<sup>3</sup>G. G. 14. 11.

<sup>4</sup>G. G. 14. 13.

<sup>5</sup>G. G. 14. 19.

<sup>6</sup>G. G. 15. 8.



of the poet, something with which Shelley is not concerned, for it is always the natural endowment that he stresses. The earlier critic says that a poet should know well both grammar and rhetoric; that he should also know "at least the principles of the other Liberal Arts, both moral and natural, to possess a strong and abundant vocabulary, to behold the monuments and relics of the Ancients, to have in one's memory the histories of the nations, and to be familiar with the geography of various lands, of seas, rivers and mountains."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the Apology Sidney discusses the poets in such a way as to show that he honors them, although he castigates those who abuse their art, particularly the writers of reprehensible comedies. Like Boccaccio, he asserts that the poets are not liars;<sup>2</sup> that the real ones, the truly honorable, Plato<sup>3</sup> would not have driven out. He maintains that the poet is capable of combining the work of the philosopher and the historian because the poet has in his mind both the general notion and the particular example; furthermore, he is superior to these other types of writers in that he is an artist and can teach delightfully.<sup>4</sup> He believes that a poet merits the

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. 14. 7, 40.  
The poet in Shelley's Alastor travels about a great deal and becomes familiar with new places; he also studies the "monuments and relics of the Ancients."

<sup>2</sup>Apology, p. 185.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 163-173.



name of Vates, and that his qualities vindicate the bestowing<sup>1</sup>  
upon him of the incomparable title of "Maker."

The reader of L'Art Poétique will inevitably realize that Boileau is expressing in this work a very high opinion of poetry, so high, in fact, that he does not want to see this art abused and gives explicit directions as well as warnings to those who wish to engage in the practice of this or any other form of writing. In his discussions of the different types of verse it is always the best that he holds up to the poets as examples. And it is the best that he demands from a writer. In one passage (already quoted) he advises a would-be author to become a mason, if his talent lies in that direction, rather<sup>2</sup> than an ordinary writer or a vulgar poet. He says emphatically:

dans l'art dangereux de rimer et d'écrire,  
Il n'est point de degrés du médiocre au pire. 3

He grows satiric at the expense of those writers who have become unduly elated over a trifling success:

Mais pour un vain bonheur qui vous a fait rimer.  
Gardez qu'un sot orgueil ne vous vienne enfumer.  
Souvent l'auteur altier de quelque chansonnette  
Au même instant prend droit de se croire poète:  
Il ne dormira plus qu'il n'ait fait un sonnet;  
Il met tous les matins six impromptus au net.  
Encore est-ce un miracle, en ses vagues furies.  
Si bientôt imprimant ses sottises rêveries,  
Il ne se fait graver au-devant du recueil,  
Couronné de lauriers par la main de Nanteuil. 4

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 154-155.

<sup>2</sup>L'Art Poétique, p. 381.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 333.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It then proceeds to a literature review, followed by a description of the methodology used in the study. The results of the study are presented in the next section, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications. The paper concludes with a summary of the main points and a list of references.

The study was conducted in a laboratory setting, and the results were compared with those of previous studies. The findings of the study are consistent with those of previous studies, and they provide new insights into the phenomenon being studied. The implications of the study are discussed in detail, and the authors conclude that the study has contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The authors would like to thank the following people for their assistance in the study: [Name], [Name], and [Name]. The study was supported by the [Organization], and the authors would like to thank them for their support.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030																																																																																																																																												
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He cautions the writer to avoid meanness:

Quoi que vous écriviez, évitez la bassesse:  
Le style le moins noble a pourtant sa noblesse. 1

There are certain things which he feels will be both helpful and essential if one wishes to succeed in so important and precarious a work as writing. He advises the author of comedy to study human nature:

Quiconque voit bien l'homme, et, d'un esprit profond,  
De tant de coeurs cachés a pénétré le fond;  
Qui sait bien ce que c'est qu'un prodigue, un avare,  
Un honnête homme, un fat, un jaloux, un bizarre,  
Sur une scène heureuse il peut les étaler.  
Et les faire à nos yeux vivre, agir et parler. 2

He suggests that the writer study the court and become acquainted with the city, since both places are rich in models; he advises him to pay attention to the customs of periods and of countries, so that his works may not lack verisimilitude. He cautions him to cherish reason always, never to deviate from good sense. He stresses moderation, restraint, one brief, epigrammatic sentence epitomizing his views on this subject:

Qui se sait borner ne sut jamais écrire. 6

In this portrait of the writer sketched by Boileau many

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 291-292.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 374.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 347.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 286-289.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 290.





characteristics seem those of Boccaccio's poet rather than Shelley's. There has been little to suggest Shelley's idea that the poets are the happiest, the best, the wisest of men, for the very reason that they are poets. The French critic seems to be interested primarily in giving practical advice to would-be authors, in showing them definitely and specifically what elements of training and personality will enable them to produce excellent works. Inspiration, the "light from heaven," he considers necessary, but not all-sufficing. This marks an important difference between the ideas of the two writers, a difference seen in the emphasis laid by the Neo-Classical critic on the concrete and the tangible in the matter of the poet's equipment, as contrasted with the less tangible and more idealistic conception expressed by Shelley of the nature of the poet.

Yet Boileau, like Shelley, holds poetry in high repute; and though he does not say, as Shelley does, that the creators of verse are the happiest, the best, and the wisest, precisely because they are poets, he feels that those who produce work that is the most admirable will be characterized by virtue, and nobility of soul. It is this ideal that he holds out to the writer:



Que votre âme et vos moeurs, peintes dans vos ouvrages,  
N'offrent jamais de vous que de nobles images. 1

Aimez donc la vertu, nourrissez-en votre âme:  
En vain l'esprit est plein d'une noble vigueur;  
Le vers se sent toujours des bassesses du coeur.  
Fuyez surtout, fuyez ces basses jalousies,  
Des vulgaires esprits malignes frénésies.  
Un sublime écrivain n'en peut être infecté;  
C'est un vice qui suit la médiocrité. 2

The idea expressed in the last two lines of this quotation that the "sublime writer" will not be subject to the pettiness and the meanness which may infect the lesser members of his tribe shows some similarity to Shelley's thought that the genuine poet will always be one of the best of mankind. The two critics agree that nobility of soul is one of the distinguishing features of the greatest among writers.

Pope follows Boileau in the stress that he lays on the poet's staying close to Nature, being an earnest student of human nature, especially as it is revealed in the works of the ancients; also in the emphasis he puts on the poet's being able to apply the principles of reason and good sense. He inveighs against dullness; his writer must be mentally alert, revealing no trace of stupidity in his productions. In the advice that Pope gives to authors, however, it must be remembered that he is speaking primarily to the critic; such a man will, in his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 388.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 389-390.

<sup>3</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 74, ll. 332-333.



opinion, be characterized by taste, judgment, learning, truth, candor, "seeming diffidence," tact, good breeding, generosity,<sup>1</sup> courage, and the ability to profit by his mistakes. Pope asks the pertinent questions:

But where's the man who counsel can bestow,  
Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?  
Unbiass'd or by favour or by spite;  
Not dully prepossess'd nor blindly right;  
Tho' learn'd, well bred, and tho' well bred sincere:  
Modestly bold, and humanly severe;  
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,  
And gladly praise the merit of a foe;  
Bless'd with a taste exact, yet unconfin'd,  
A knowledge both of books and humankind;  
Gen'rous converse; a soul exempt from pride;  
And love to praise, with reason on his side?  
Such once were critics; such the happy few  
Athens and Rome in better ages knew. 2

Another passage might be applied to some of those who produce works other than criticism, or at least as much to them as to the critics:

Now they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown  
Employ their pains to spurn some others down;  
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,  
Contending wits become the sport of fools;  
But still the worst with most regret commend,  
For each ill author is as bad a friend. 3

The writers whom Pope condemns here are surely not characterized by nobility of soul, a quality which may be implied in the ideal of the critic sketched a few lines above. The last line

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<sup>1</sup>An Essay on Criticism, p. 75, ll. 1-23.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 76, ll. 72-85.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 74, ll. 314-319.





of the last quotation is significant, for in it Pope associates poor writing with defects in character, an idea which is close to Shelley's point of view.

Thus it can be seen that Shelley is not alone in the high opinion that he expresses of the poet's character. The other critics discussed in this chapter set forth what they consider are or should be his virtues, either stressing high-mindedness directly or suggesting it by what they say. Their ideas are an approximation to Shelley's thought that the creator of poetry will be among the "best" of men, although none of them, with the exception of Pope, possibly, or Boileau, suggest that such a man will be "good" precisely because he is a poet--these two critics do not make the explicit statement made by Shelley of this point of view, the similarity being chiefly one of inference from a line or two in their works. Boileau and Pope insist upon wisdom as a characteristic of the writer, the wisdom that will enable him to exercise good judgment and common sense--from this standpoint they would look upon him as among the "wisest" of men, although such a definition of the term would undoubtedly be different from what Shelley has in mind when he uses the word to describe the poet. As far as this artist's being the "happiest" of men is concerned, the only critic who approaches Shelley's idea is Boccaccio, who feels that the poet



dwells afar from the unrest of the world and its struggle for material possessions, blessed with a tranquillity denied those who do not have his sense of values. Even this thought, however, is different from that expressed in the Defence, where the poet is not looked upon as one who has retreated from the world, rather as one who is fully aware that his poetry has the power of changing the world, through its effect on the individual mind. His sense of values is not the same as that of others, but his happiness springs primarily from his perception of the inner rhythm and harmony which is not discernible by his fellow-men and to whom he endeavors to make it known through the embodiments in his representations of the beautiful and the good.

In further defense of the poet Shelley asserts that, even though various errors have been imputed to poets of former days, this does not really matter: "Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance..."<sup>1</sup> Time, he says, has washed out all traces of their faults. As far as modern poets are concerned, "Observe in what a ludicrous chaos the imputations of real or fictitious crimes have been confused in the contemporary calumnies against poetry and poets..."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 36, ll. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ll. 15-17.



They should not be judged too harshly, Shelley suggests, since the logical faculty does not control the moments of inspiration, and since, in the intervals between, the poet becomes like other men, "and is abandoned to the sudden reflux of the influences under which others habitually live."<sup>1</sup> Being more delicately organized than other men, the poet, Shelley feels, will be sensitive to both pain and pleasure to a degree unknown to those of a different constitution. He will, however, Shelley says, render "himself obnoxious to calumny, when he neglects to observe the circumstances under which these objects of universal pursuit and flight have disguised themselves in one another's garments."<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, Shelley remarks, most of the charges made against the poets have been untrue.

Shelley now draws near the close of his essay, in which he has been examining the nature of poetry and endeavoring to show its effects upon society, accompanying this with an impassioned plea for a proper consideration of the value of this form of art, and a defense of the poet himself. After describing what he has been attempting to do in this first, completed part of his Defence and sketching briefly what he

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ll. 33-34.

It is interesting to notice that Shelley's defense of the poet as expressed here is based upon that conception of him stressed by all Romantics, the intensity and the importance of his "moments of inspiration."

<sup>2</sup>Defence, p. 37, ll. 2-5.



plans in the second, projected part (never written), Shelley rests his case. He does so with one sentence, brief, but exceedingly powerful in its suggestions and implications: "Poets<sup>1</sup> are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

This chapter has been concerned with an examination of Shelley's Defence, with a view to revealing the ideas contained in it and showing them against a background of those expressed by Boccaccio, Sidney, Boileau, and Pope. It has been a background study and not one of sources, although in several of the notes suggestion has been made of Shelley's indebtedness to Plato. The emphasis in the body of the work, however, has been on likenesses and differences of ideas only, between Shelley and the other critics mentioned.

Considered as an apology for poetry, the Defence has been viewed as the heir of a long line of similar Italian-Elizabethan works, with Shelley motivated, like Boccaccio

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In Scaliger's conception of the poets (see Spingarn, A Literary History of the Renaissance, p. 265) they were looked upon as the "first priests, prophets, and legislators of the world..."

This last sentence of the Defence, as has been pointed out by Mr. Allen R. Benham (in "Shelley and Browning," MLN, 38: 503), is reflected in Browning's How It Strikes a Contemporary, as are other ideas of Shelley concerning the function of the poet.

The source of the idea expressed in this famous sentence of the Defence may be the same as that from which it has been suggested Shelley derived other ideas; that is, Plato, who ranks the tragic poets with the lawgivers as benefactors of the community. (See Mr. Atkins, op. cit., pp. 55-56.)



The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also mentions the scope of the study and the limitations of the study.

The second part of the paper discusses the methodology used in the study. It mentions the data sources and the data collection methods. It also mentions the data analysis methods used in the study.

The third part of the paper discusses the results of the study. It mentions the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn from the study.

The fourth part of the paper discusses the implications of the study. It mentions the practical implications of the study and the theoretical implications of the study.

The fifth part of the paper discusses the limitations of the study. It mentions the limitations of the study and the limitations of the study.

The sixth part of the paper discusses the conclusions of the study. It mentions the conclusions of the study and the conclusions of the study.

The seventh part of the paper discusses the future research. It mentions the future research and the future research.

and Sidney, by a desire to defend poetry against its detractors. A further similarity among all these has been shown in the fact that their arguments are based largely on ethical and moral grounds, even though there is some variance in their methods, noticeable chiefly in the less personal and specific nature of the replies given in the Defence.

It has also been shown that Shelley's essay and those of the Neo-Classicists are alike in that all three productions are concerned, to some extent at least, with the elements and principles of poetry. L'Art Poétique, however, is much more specific than either An Essay on Criticism or the Defence, both of which are more general in nature, the latter being the most general of all. This is noticeable in the fact that Boileau and Pope--particularly Boileau--offer in their works practical suggestions to writers and critics, a practice seldom observed in the Defence. A further difference appears in the tone of the essays, satirical in L'Art Poétique and An Essay on Criticism, poetic and impassioned in the Defence. This essay, moreover, unlike the others, belongs in the line of apologies for poetry.

From the detailed examination of the ideas found in the



Defence in connection with those expressed by the other critics, several facts have emerged. In the first place, there are a number of opinions advanced by Shelley which are similar to those found in the works of the other writers. One of them is his admiration for Greek art, especially as it is reflected in the poetry of that age, an admiration in which he is joined by Boccaccio, Boileau, and Pope, with Sidney saying little about Greek literature as a whole, but exhibiting the highest regard for Plato and referring to Aristotle several times as a source, the influence of the Poetics upon the Apology being very noticeable. Latin literature does not fare so well at the hands of any of these critics. Closely connected with Shelley's esteem for Greek poetry is his singling out for special praise one quality which, he feels, was a powerful factor in the artistic success of the Athenian drama and is vital in every work of art--unity, the harmonious relationship of parts to one another and to the whole. The observance of this unity is stressed by all the other critics also.

Similar ideas are also expressed by all of these critics concerning the function of poetry. They feel that its purpose is to please and to instruct, verse being characterized by both harmony of sound and depth of thought. This instruction, more-



over, takes on a moral tinge with all of them. They agree that poetry is a distinctly useful art, even though their opinions as to the precise uses to which it may be put vary slightly, Boccaccio contending, for instance, that the reading of the poets, many of whom were theologians, would be conducive to the development of piety in good Catholics of his time; and Shelley, that poetry, through its effect upon the imagination of the individual reader, will bring about a betterment in the conditions of all mankind. In none of these critical essays is there found a denial of the beneficent effects of the poet's art--instead, all agree on the idea of the essential morality of poetry.

Practically all of them, moreover, feel that the importance of poetry is such that the judges of it should be selected with care, Boccaccio asserting that labor, study, and perseverance are necessary if one wishes to arrive at a proper appreciation of this art; Boileau and Pope advising the writer to be exceedingly careful in his choice of a critic, and satirizing those who try to play this role without the essential qualifications; Shelley insisting upon the verdict of the "selectest." Sidney alone emphasizes the more popular appeal of poetry.





Several ideas concerning the poet also are common to all of these critics. Just as their opinion of poetry is high, so is their estimation of the creator of this art, although Shelley stresses more than do the others the essential "goodness" of the poet. All of them, however, feel that the genuine writer is characterized by nobility of soul. All of them, moreover, believe that the poet is inspired by some influence outside himself, which is related to a divine source. Thus it is not surprising that they concur in the idea of the poet's high-mindedness.

Relationships have been observed between the ideas of Shelley and those expressed by one or a few of the other critics. The refutation of charges brought against poetry is common to all of the apologists, and all of them reply directly to the objection that this art lacks usefulness. The thought that poetry developed out of the religious instinct of man, or at least was closely connected with it, is found in the works of Boccaccio, Boileau, and Shelley, with a suggestion of the same idea in the Apology. The opinion that metre is both convenient and popular is advanced by Boccaccio, Sidney, and Shelley. The remarks made by Shelley on the differing natures of a "story..of detached facts" and a poem, suggest the contrast drawn by Sidney between history and poetry. Shelley's idea that poetry has the power



of transmuting base metal is stressed by Boileau also, particularly in his treatment of the drama, and referred to by Sidney in his remark that the poet can change a "brassen" world to a golden one. A further resemblance of Shelley to Boileau is seen in the emphasis laid by both on the element of love in poetry, this idea being developed more fully, however, by the former. Shelley and Boileau are also alike in their delving into history, although for a different purpose, the former to find illustrations proving his thesis, and the latter to give an account of the growth of various types of poetry. Pope, too, goes into history to some extent, but does not emphasize this phase of his work--with the exception of what he says about the ancients--so much as Shelley and Boileau. Lastly, high praise is given to Homer by Shelley, Boileau, and Pope.

A number of points of difference between Shelley and the others, involving either the treatment of an idea or the idea itself, are also apparent as a result of this examination. Shelley's philosophical treatment of utility as applied to poetry is different from that found in the works of any of the other critics. On the question of taste, this word being used to refer to the quality in a poem that renders it pleasing to the discriminating critic, Shelley both agrees and disagrees with the Neo-Classicists. Taste is originally defined by Shelley as an approximation to that order peculiar to a specific type of



representation and yielding a pleasure greater than that given by any other order. This is an Aristotelian idea , and it appears in L'Art Poétique also, where Boileau, in his discussion of the various forms of poetry, stresses the qualities peculiar to each type that will yield a pleasure characteristic of this form of verse. The question of taste, however, the word being used in the sense referred to before, is, as far as Boileau and Pope are concerned, bound up with another point, the emphasis laid by them on reason in a work of art. Shelley differs from them in the stress that he puts on this quality in a poem; where they emphasize reason he is chiefly concerned with the imagination, this line of demarcation being commonly used to indicate the separation between the Neo-Classical and the Romantic points of view. Yet Shelley does not ignore reason, good sense, the matter of content in a poem; he, as well as Boileau and Pope, feels that depth of thought is as necessary as a harmony of sound. What Shelley appears to be attacking is the abuse of reason rather than the right use of it--at least what he considers the abuse of it. He freely admits that some good has been accomplished by those sciences that serve utility in the narrower sense of the word, but has-



tens to add that this good is the result of the poetry present in these systems of thought. There is no hint, of course, in the works of the Neo-Classicists of Shelley's assault on the rationalistic sciences because of what he conceives to be their failure to bring about an amelioration of human misery. This failure is inherent in them, Shelley asserts, because they lack poetry--and the beneficent effects of poetry are, to Shelley, dependent upon the active operation of the imagination. Therefore the gulf between him and the Neo-Classicists is never bridged, on his side the stressing of imagination, on theirs the emphasis on reason. It is undoubtedly this point of view which makes Shelley lay a greater stress on the inspiration of genius than do the other critics.

Several ideas are expressed in the Defence which are not found in the works of the other critics. Among them is the consideration of the work of Dante and Milton, upon both of whom Shelley bestows high praise. Another is Shelley's explicit statement that the finest passages of poetry are not produced by toil and labor, this idea being one indissolubly connected with the greater stress that he lays on the inspiration of the poet.





There is also a silence in the Defence on one point, which one might interpret to be as significant as anything Shelley might say on this particular point. His agreement with the other critics on the question of unity of action, the harmonious relationship of parts to one another and to the whole, has already been mentioned. On any other unity, however, he maintains complete silence, as contrasted with both Sidney and Boileau, who discuss exhaustively all the unities and strongly recommend their observance.

The broader definition of poetry expressed in the Defence reveals one of the two most striking points of difference between Shelley's work and those of the other critics. This wider conception of poetry is an idea fundamental in a great part of the Defence and one which, in many places, has rendered difficult the comparing of Shelley's opinions with those of the others for the reason that Shelley finds the "poetic" in that which is not ordinarily termed "poetry." As a natural result of this view he asserts that the usual distinction between poetry and prose is erroneous, that the poetical element may be found in the latter as well as in the former, that it may be present in civil institutions and in



various systems of thought. This point of view is influential in determining his attitude toward metre, which, he says, is not essential to poetry. Sidney agrees with him in the idea that metre is unnecessary, although the earlier critic's reasons for this position do not grow out of the same broad view of poetry as that expressed by Shelley.

The other outstanding point of difference in Shelley's essay is his idea of the way in which poetry operates to produce its beneficent effects. This idea, together with his broader definition of poetry, could be called Shelley's most original contribution to the criticism of verse. The other critics discussed admit the essential morality of poetry, but do not approach Shelley's attempt at a psychological explanation of the reasons why poetry should always be considered moral. In this connection there might be mentioned some of the good effects of poetry referred to specifically by Shelley alone. He states that the abolition of personal and domestic slavery was one of the results of this art, that the partial emancipation of women was an outgrowth of the poetic element found in the Christian and chivalric systems of thought. He contends strongly that there is always a close connection



between the growth of the drama and the amount of good or evil present in the affairs of men, that a decay in the drama--occurring when the element of poetry is lacking--is associated with a corruption in manners.

How, then, does poetry operate in order to produce its beneficent effects? In the following manner, Shelley says: the reading of poetry stimulates the imagination, the "great instrument of moral good"; the stimulating of the imagination results in the reader's identifying himself with the characters represented in the poem--the best effect being produced when these representations are "moral idealisms," but a good effect being felt when the characters fall short of perfection, in the knowledge of the human heart resulting from a familiarity with these types. This identification of the reader with the characters in the poem is synonymous with the quickening of love, which is, Shelley remarks, the identifying of oneself with the "beautiful" existing outside oneself. Thus, he asserts, poetry is always productive of beneficial effects, for it eventually awakens love, "the great secret of morals."

It can easily be seen that it is upon the activity of the imagination that all these effects described by Shelley depend. Therefore it can be said that the ideas he expresses concern-

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ing the imagination are the most vital part of his critical theories as expressed in the Defence, and that which most noticeably distinguishes it from the other works that have been considered in connection with it. Without this stress on the imagination and the associated emphasis on the moral effects of poetry, Shelley's Defence would lack that which now gives it vitality and whatever of originality it contains.



### CHAPTER III

#### SHELLEY AND THE OTHER ROMANTICS

Shelley's ideas in the Defence have been examined and compared with those expressed by the other apologists, Boccaccio and Sidney, also with those of two Neo-Classicists, Boileau and Pope. It will be the purpose of this chapter to consider Shelley's poetic theories in connection with those of the other major Romantics—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Keats—with a view to ascertaining likenesses as well as differences. In this investigation the field will be widened, for Shelley's critical ideas wherever they appear, both within the Defence and outside, will be examined. This method of procedure may necessitate in some instances the repeating of material already discussed in its original setting, the Defence, but such repetition will occur only where it seems unavoidable for the presentation of Shelley's opinions in juxtaposition with those expressed by the other Romantics. Through this comparison the relationship of his ideas to those of his own time will be revealed.

In such an investigation the first questions asked of the poets when they turn critics would probably be these: What is poetry, and what is its general nature? In the Defence Shelley has said: "Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined as 'the ex-

# THEORY

## THEORY OF THE EARTH

The theory of the earth is a branch of geology which deals with the origin and development of the earth and its various parts. It is a science which seeks to explain the processes which have shaped the earth and its various parts. The theory of the earth is a branch of geology which deals with the origin and development of the earth and its various parts. It is a science which seeks to explain the processes which have shaped the earth and its various parts.

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pression of the imagination...'<sup>1</sup>" The significance of this definition has already been pointed out: it shows the quality always stressed by Shelley in any poetic work. Considering poetry in its narrower sense as well as in its relation to language and to the other arts, Shelley says:

But poetry in a more restricted sense expresses those arrangements of language, and especially metrical language, which are created by that imperial faculty, whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man. And this springs from the nature itself of language, which is a more direct representation of the actions and passions of our internal being, and is susceptible of more various and delicate combinations, than colour, form, or motion, and is more plastic and obedient to the control of that faculty of which it is the creation. For language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination, and has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments, and conditions of art, have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression. The former is as a mirror which reflects, the latter as a cloud which enfeebles, the light of which both are mediums of communication.<sup>2</sup>

Here Shelley claims for poetry a supremacy in the field of the arts, a supremacy which he maintains for it in comparison with science and other knowledge, for poetry is, to him, "at once the centre and circumference of all knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred."<sup>3</sup> Concerning the particular nature of the poetic art, Shelley also expresses himself thus:

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions

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<sup>1</sup> Defence, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
JANUARY 1964  
JAMES H. HARRIS, JR.  
JAMES H. HARRIS, JR.

TABLE I	
Run	Yield (%)
1	85
2	75
3	65
4	55
5	45
6	35
7	25
8	15
9	10
10	5
11	2
12	1
13	0
14	0
15	0
16	0
17	0
18	0
19	0
20	0
21	0
22	0
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42	0
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45	0
46	0
47	0
48	0
49	0
50	0

ANAL. Calcd. for  $C_{10}H_{12}O$ : C, 85.7%; H, 8.6%. Found: C, 85.5%; H, 8.5%.  
IR (KBr): 1715 (C=O), 1640 (C=C), 1610 (C=C), 1580 (C=C), 1540 (C=C), 1500 (C=C), 1480 (C=C), 1460 (C=C), 1440 (C=C), 1420 (C=C), 1400 (C=C), 1380 (C=C), 1360 (C=C), 1340 (C=C), 1320 (C=C), 1300 (C=C), 1280 (C=C), 1260 (C=C), 1240 (C=C), 1220 (C=C), 1200 (C=C), 1180 (C=C), 1160 (C=C), 1140 (C=C), 1120 (C=C), 1100 (C=C), 1080 (C=C), 1060 (C=C), 1040 (C=C), 1020 (C=C), 1000 (C=C), 980 (C=C), 960 (C=C), 940 (C=C), 920 (C=C), 900 (C=C), 880 (C=C), 860 (C=C), 840 (C=C), 820 (C=C), 800 (C=C), 780 (C=C), 760 (C=C), 740 (C=C), 720 (C=C), 700 (C=C), 680 (C=C), 660 (C=C), 640 (C=C), 620 (C=C), 600 (C=C), 580 (C=C), 560 (C=C), 540 (C=C), 520 (C=C), 500 (C=C), 480 (C=C), 460 (C=C), 440 (C=C), 420 (C=C), 400 (C=C), 380 (C=C), 360 (C=C), 340 (C=C), 320 (C=C), 300 (C=C), 280 (C=C), 260 (C=C), 240 (C=C), 220 (C=C), 200 (C=C), 180 (C=C), 160 (C=C), 140 (C=C), 120 (C=C), 100 (C=C), 80 (C=C), 60 (C=C), 40 (C=C), 20 (C=C), 0 (C=C).

1H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.2 (d, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 6.8 (d, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 6.4 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 6.0 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 5.6 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 5.2 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 4.8 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 4.4 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 4.0 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 3.6 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 3.2 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 2.8 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 2.4 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 2.0 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 1.6 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 1.2 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 0.8 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 0.4 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz), 0.0 (t, 2H, J = 10 Hz).

of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary conditions of them...<sup>1</sup>

This definition is interesting, not only in its suggesting the close relationship between poetry and emotion, but also in Shelley's stressing the importance of the whole which results from a combination of the various poetic elements.

The most characteristic thing, however, about Shelley's definitions of poetry is their reflection of the idealized conception which he held of his art. "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth."<sup>2</sup> Also, "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds."<sup>3</sup>

Wordsworth, in many of his definitions of poetry, expresses the same idealized conception. There is the familiar one: "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science."<sup>4</sup> Another is much the same: "Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge --it is as immortal as the heart of man."<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that the idea given in the first definition, of the relation-

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<sup>1</sup>  
Preface to Prometheus Unbound.

<sup>2</sup>  
Defence, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>  
Wordsworth, p. 795 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

<sup>5</sup>  
Ibid.



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ship of poetry to science, is the same as Shelley's. Furthermore, Wordsworth claims for poetry the same supremacy over other arts that Shelley expresses. The two are also alike in their Aristotelian conception of the nature of this art. Wordsworth says: "Poetry is the image of man and nature."<sup>1</sup> Shelley looks upon poetry as a "mimetic art." In addition, the older critic is like Shelley in his doctrine of poetic inspiration, defining poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings..."<sup>2</sup> In actual practice the two are different, for Shelley appears more the poet of spontaneity, his lyrics especially seeming the result of some strong emotion in the mind of their creator, as it responds to the invisible but powerful influence of a divine breath that animates it.

One definition of Coleridge's shows the same idealistic view of poetry as most of Shelley's show, also the same notion of the supremacy of poetry over other knowledge. "For poetry is the blossom and the fragrancy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotion, language."<sup>3</sup> Another approaches Shelley's superlative, but stresses the form more than the spirit: "I wish our clever young poets would remember my homely definitions of prose and poetry; that is, prose=words in their best order; poetry = the best words in the best order."<sup>4</sup> There are a terseness and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 794.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 797.

<sup>3</sup>Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, p. 381.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., vol. VI, Table Talk, p. 293 (July 12, 1827).



practicality about this definition that are characteristic of others Coleridge has given.

A poem may in one sense be a dream, but it must be a waking dream.<sup>1</sup>

Poetry is certainly something more than good sense, but it must be good sense, at all events, just as a palace is more than a house, but it must be a house, at least.<sup>2</sup>

To please me, a poem must be either music or sense; if it is neither, I confess I can not interest myself in it.<sup>3</sup>

It would be difficult to imagine Shelley the author of these definitions—they have no halo of the Elysian light that surrounds Shelley's conception of his art. It is also somewhat difficult to conceive of the creator of Kubla Khan and The Ancient Mariner as the author of some of the opinions expressed here.

Aside from these brief definitions which express, perhaps rather whimsically, Coleridge's personal tastes in poetry, he has given others, considering the subject from a distinctively philosophical point of view. In his definitions of this sort he makes use of one cardinal principle of beauty, this being, as he calls it, "il più nell' uno—multitude in unity; and there is no doubt that such is the principle of beauty."<sup>4</sup> Applying this rule of aesthetics to his criticism of poetry, he says:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., vol. IV, Lectures upon Shakespeare and Other Dramatists, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. VI, Table Talk, p. 310 (May 9, 1830).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 433 (April 5, 1833).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 380 (December 27, 1831).



...in verse...the words, the media, must be beautiful, and ought to attract your notice--yet not so much and so perpetually as to destroy the unity which ought to result from the whole poem... But the great thing in poetry is, quocumque modo, to effect a unity of impression upon the whole; and a too great fulness and profusion of point in the parts will prevent this.<sup>1</sup>

Also:

...poetry, or rather a poem, is a species of composition, opposed to science, as having intellectual pleasure for its object, and as attaining its end by the use of language natural to us in a state of excitement,--but distinguished from other species of composition, not excluded by the former criterion, by permitting a pleasure from the whole consistent with a consciousness of pleasure from the component parts;--and the perfection of which is, to communicate from each part the greatest immediate pleasure compatible with the largest sum of pleasure on the whole.<sup>2</sup>

In his consideration of the Athenian drama (see Thesis, p. 93)

Shelley appears to be applying, to some extent, this principle of "multitude in unity," and, using the same measuring-rod as that given by Coleridge, for he praises this Greek drama because it was so perfect and admirable as a whole. He also expresses admiration for the way in which each part was poetical and pleasing, thus contributing to the delightful totality of effect. Coleridge, it is true, derived his principle from another source than Shelley's, stating that it originated in the Roman school of painting, yet there is a great similarity between what Coleridge selects

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., p. 468 (July 3, 1833).

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., vol. IV, Lectures upon Shakespeare and Other Dramatists, p. 20.

# THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT  
TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY  
JOSEPH NEALE

VOLUME I  
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT  
TO THE YEAR 1630

BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY  
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as his basis for admiration of a work of art and the Greek standards of unity and proportion which influenced Shelley to such an extent.

It is also interesting to see that Coleridge, like Shelley, would associate with poetry the other arts in his application of this underlying principle. He says: "Now this definition applies equally to painting and music as to poetry; and in truth the term poetry is alike applicable to all three."<sup>1</sup> This is a broad definition of poetry, but not so broad as that of Shelley's, which would, in addition to all the arts, embrace civil and religious habits as well. Distinguishing poetry in particular from the other arts he has mentioned, Coleridge says:

The vehicle alone constitutes the difference; and the term 'poetry' is rightly applied by eminence to measured words, only because the sphere of their action is far wider, the power of giving permanence to them much more certain, and incomparably greater the facility by which men, not defective by nature or disease, may be enabled to derive habitual pleasure and instruction from them.<sup>2</sup>

There is a similarity between the ideas expressed here and those of Shelley's quoted on the first and second pages of this chapter. Coleridge gives preference to "measured words" because of their more universal application, their greater power to make a more lasting impression, and their greater facility in giving pleasure. Shelley feels that poetry acquires a higher fame than other arts

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid.

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because the poet uses a more favorable medium; language, he says (see Thesis, pp.44-45) is more direct than other media, also more flexible, and more obedient to the control of the imagination.

One definition of Byron's shows this poet, like Shelley, under the power of the imagination, his thoughts touched by that which it is difficult to express in tangible form: "What is Poetry?--  
The feeling of a Former world and Future."<sup>1</sup> In another, Byron says: "I thought that poetry was an art, or an attribute, and not a profession..."<sup>2</sup> The keynote of Byron's attitude toward his work is found here; he was unwilling to look upon poetry as a means of livelihood, at least when other means were available; and it was not until he felt somewhat the press of financial stringency that he was at all concerned with the money his poems might bring him. Shelley, too, would not have looked upon poetry as a profession in the sense that law ~~and~~ medicine ~~and~~ banking are professions, yet his attitude toward his art was much more serious than that of Byron, who thought of poetry as a pleasing and respectable avocation for a gentleman. Byron chose to write; Shelley was compelled to by the power of the spirit within him.

Byron, however, in his more serious moods, could express--and undoubtedly felt at those times--an idealized conception of poetry similar to that of Shelley, as shown in this definition,

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<sup>1</sup>

Byron, Letters and Journals, vol. V, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., vol. IV, p. 238 (from a letter to Thomas Moore, June 1, 1818).

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where the art is considered from the point of view of what it does:

For what is Poesy but to create  
 From overfeeling Good or Ill; and aim  
 At an external life beyond our fate,  
 And be the new Prometheus of new men,  
 Bestowing fire from Heaven, and then, too late,  
 Finding the pleasure given repaid with pain,  
     And vultures to the heart of the bestower,  
     Who, having lavished his high gift in vain,<sup>1</sup>  
 Lies chained to his lone rock by the sea-shore?

The last few lines may have been prompted, as many of Byron's opinions were, by some of the painful circumstances of his life, and would not be inapplicable to Shelley.

Another definition of Byron's elaborates somewhat his idea of poetry's being an attribute rather than a profession.

A man's poetry is a distinct faculty, or soul, and has no more to do with the every-day individual than the Inspiration with the Pythoness when removed from her tripod.<sup>2</sup>

The idea expressed here bears a striking resemblance to what Shelley says, in his Defence, of the poet, who during the intervals when he is not stimulated to create, becomes as other men, subject to the same pains and pleasures. The motivation of Byron's remark seems a little different, however, for this author is evidently still thinking of poetry as something removed from the writer's ordinary pursuits.

Keats's conception of poetry was, like that of Coleridge, influenced primarily by his basic view of art, as expressed in the well-known lines:

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<sup>1</sup> The Prophecy of Dante, Canto the Fourth, ll. 11-19.

<sup>2</sup> Byron, Letters and Journals, vol. V, p. 479 (from a letter to Thomas Moore, November 16, 1821).





'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all  
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.<sup>1</sup>

That this conception underlay all his reflections on his art and profoundly influenced his practice may be shown from this brief statement: "—I never can feel certain of any truth but from a clear perception of its Beauty."<sup>2</sup> This idea, he never abandoned, although for the mature Keats it was not enough. Nor would it have been enough for Shelley unless the beautiful were identified, as Shelley identified it, with the true and the good.

Like Shelley, Keats looked upon poetry as a very serious matter. Describing it in a state of spiritual intoxication, he says, after dwelling upon the beauties of Sleep:

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?  
 Fresher than berries of a mountain tree?  
 More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,  
 Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagles?  
 What is it? And to what shall I compare it?  
 It has a glory, and nought else can share it;  
 The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,  
 Chasing away all worldliness and folly:  
 Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder,  
 Or the low rumblings earth's regions under,  
 And sometimes like a gentle whispering  
 Of all the secrets of some wond'rous thing  
 That breathes around us in the vacant air:  
 So that we look around us with prying stare,  
 Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial limning;  
 And catch the soft floatings from a faint-hearted hymning;  
 To see the laurel wreath, on high suspended,  
 That is to crown our name when life is ended.  
 Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,  
 And from the heart up-springs, rejoice! rejoice!

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<sup>1</sup>

Ode on a Grecian Urn, ll. 49-50.

<sup>2</sup>

Keats, p. 345 (from a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, December 31, 1818).





Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things,  
And die away in ardent mutterings.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of poetry's being that which has the power of "chasing away all worldliness and folly" is very similar to Shelley's conception, as is the thought expressed here of its high and mysterious source and its ability to give joy.

Whenever Keats attempts a definition of poetry, the realization of what his art means to him and his intense love for it carry him along in a resistless surge of the imagination, as may be seen in the following:

A drainless shower  
Of light is Poesy; 'tis the supreme of power;  
'Tis might half slumb'ring on its own right arm.  
The very archings of her eyelids charm  
A thousand willing agents to obey,  
And still she governs with the mildest sway:  
But strength alone though of the Muses born  
Is like a fallen angel: trees uptorn,  
Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres  
Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs  
And thorns of life; forgetting the great end  
Of Poesy, that it should be a friend  
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.<sup>2</sup>

Although Shelley and Keats are alike in their conviction that poetry is power--and a power also to aid mankind, there is a difference shown in the expressing of this idea, a difference characteristic of the two men themselves. Shelley's conception, as expressed in many of his definitions, shows more of a bodiless, other-worldly quality, related as it is to the Platonic source of the beautiful

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<sup>1</sup> Sleep and Poetry, ll. 19-40.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ll. 235-247.



and the good; it is often ethereal, illuminated by that light which never was on sea or land. Keats's conception, as expressed in the two definitions quoted, is more full-blooded, more feverishly intense, showing in one place the promptings of a fearful, strange, and unseen power; in the other, a concrete embodiment of this same power in the form of a woman.

As to the material that may be treated in poetry, Shelley's conception is by far the broadest of all the Romantics'; for him the poetic is found in all the arts as well as in civil and religious systems of thought. As far as poetry in its more restricted sense is concerned, he has a number of interesting things to say about its subject-matter. His preference for moral idealisms as a theme, expressed in the Preface to Prometheus Unbound, has already been pointed out in the Defence (see Thesis, pp. 65-66 ), as well as his willingness to accept something short of these moral idealisms in the highest type of drama, provided the representation be such as to produce a healing or purging effect or awaken the human heart to a knowledge of itself. One subject with which Shelley made experiments in his work (noticeably, The Cenci) was an exceedingly dangerous one, especially as far as the English public was concerned. This subject, Shelley defends in the following manner:

Incest is, like many other incorrect things, a very poetical circumstance. It may be the excess of love or hate. It may be the defiance of everything for the sake of another, which clothes itself in the glory of the highest heroism, or it may be that cynical rage which, confounding the good and the bad



in existing opinions, breaks through them for the purpose of rioting in selfishness and antipathy.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning part of Calderon's Cabellos de Absalom, which he admires very much, Shelley says: "The incest scene of Amon and Tamar is perfectly tremendous."<sup>2</sup> In the passage quoted above, Shelley, with his usual frankness, breaks through the crust of convention and tradition to defend on poetic grounds a subject which some poets, notably Byron, hint at and suggest, but are afraid to express openly. It is interesting to know, however, that Shelley did not rank The Cenci among his highest works, assigning to Prometheus Unbound a far higher place.<sup>3</sup>

As has been shown in the previous chapter, Shelley, in the Defence, returns to the position expressed in the Preface to Prometheus Unbound, believing that the poet will do well to express other than his own conceptions of right and wrong and will do best when he produces that which is the "image of life expressed in its eternal truth." His application of this principle to the works of Shakespeare and Calderon has already been discussed (see Thesis, pp. 98-99), as has his preference for the highest type of comedy.

A phase of subject-matter with which Shelley was always vitally concerned and which, had he lived longer, might have been

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<sup>1</sup>Prose Works, vol. II, p. 305 (from a letter to Mrs. Gisborne, November 16, 1819).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Dowden, p. 434.





developed further, he mentions in his Notes to Hellas:

The final chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, &c., may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age, but to anticipate however darkly a period of regeneration and happiness is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader 'magno nec proximus intervallo' of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the 'lion shall lie down with the lamb,' and 'omnis feret omnia tellus.' Let these great names be my authority and my excuse.

One more remark made by Shelley concerning the material with which poetry deals is of interest because of its connection with what he said in the Defence concerning the way in which poetry works, creating "by combination and representation."

I am reading Anastasius. One would think that Lord Byron had taken his idea of the three last cantos of Don Juan from this book. That, of course, has nothing to do with the merit of this latter, poetry having nothing to do with the invention of facts.<sup>1</sup>

This remark is consistent with what Shelley says in the Defence concerning the differences between a poem and a story of particular facts.

In his conception of the subject-matter of poetry in general, Wordsworth makes no effort to restrict its scope; rather, he seems to feel that universality is the keynote, that anything which is of interest to, or concerns the problems of, mankind is a fit subject

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<sup>1</sup> Prose Works, vol. II, pp. 341-342 (from a letter to Mrs. Shelley, August 11, 1821).



for poetry. In this connection he says:

Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me--to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery.<sup>1</sup>

This is similar to Shelley's idea of drama's fulfilling a high function when it represents the truth of human passions--a characteristic of Shakespeare's work that wins the admiration of Shelley. The "combinations of forms and imagery" is also like Shelley's idea of poetry's creating "by combination and representation."

The same idea expressed in the quotation above, Wordsworth repeats in one of his poems, with a specific application to verse:

Through the bold wings of Poesy affect  
The clouds, and wheel around the mountain tops  
Rejoicing, from her loftiest height she drops  
Well pleased to skim the plain with wild flowers deckt  
Or muse in solemn grove whose shades protect  
The lingering dew--there steals along, or stops  
Watching the least small bird that round her hops,  
Or creeping worm, with sensitive respect.<sup>2</sup>

These quotations suggest that phase of life which was the avowed subject-matter of Wordsworth's poetry, in theory and largely in practice. He says in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads:

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems, was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, as far as was possible, in a selec-

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1

Wordsworth, p. 795 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

2

Though the Bold Wings of Poesy Affect, ll. 1-8.



tion of language really used by men, and at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary objects should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect...<sup>1</sup>

Whereas Shelley expressed no concern with any particular class of people as suitable characters for portrayal in poetry, emphasizing more the universality of this art and its appeal to all men of all times, yet he admittedly treats his subject-matter in the same fashion as that mentioned by Wordsworth in the last lines of this quotation. Poetry, according to Shelley, "lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar..."<sup>2</sup>

In his consideration of themes suitable for poetry Coleridge mentions some specific ones which he considers legitimate. In a letter telling of a conversation which he has had with the German poet, Klopstock, Coleridge says that he believes "the passion of love as well suited to the purposes of poetry as any other passion..."<sup>3</sup> He explains his italics by saying

...that it was a cheap way of pleasing to fix the attention of the reader through a long poem on the mere appetite. Well! but, said he, you see, that such poems please everybody. I answered, that it was the province of a great poet to raise people up to his own level, not to descend to theirs.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, p. 791 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

<sup>2</sup> Defence, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, p. 549.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.





The high conception of poetry expressed in the last two lines of this quotation is one which Shelley maintained<sup>1</sup> over and over in the Defence; to him poetry must always lead the way, for it is "the source of whatever of beautiful or generous or true can have place in an evil time." Furthermore, love, in its highest form, Shelley eulogizes as a theme for poetry (see Thesis, p. 116); he is much more emphatic on this point than Coleridge.

Another similarity of ideas in the views of the two men is seen in the following quotation from Coleridge:

In Pindar, Chaucer, Dante, Milton, and many more, we have instances of the close connection of poetic genius with the love of liberty and of genuine reformation.<sup>2</sup>

The qualities which awakened admiration in Coleridge for these poets, Shelley admires also, especially their connection with "genuine reformation," which, as shown in the quotation given shortly before from his notes to Hellas, he considers a poetic theme.

Coleridge's attitude toward another type of subject-matter is well known, and is expressed by him in that part of the Biographia Literaria which describes the inception of the Lyrical Ballads. After telling of Wordsworth's decision to choose subjects from ordinary life, Coleridge continues his account of their plan for the work:

In this idea originated the plan of the LYRICAL BALLADS; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic;

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<sup>1</sup>  
Defence, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>  
Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, p. 303.





yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude expressed here has, of course, been recognized as marking a new epoch in literary criticism.<sup>2</sup> Since Shelley, however, and not Coleridge, is the subject of this paper, it may be remarked that, although such ideas concerning the wonderful as a theme for poetry seem never to have been expressed by Shelley in such a definite and specific manner, yet in such prose works as Zastrozzi and St. Irvyne he comes close to, if not actually crosses, the borderline between mere "shadows of the imagination" and the characters that people a common-sense world, to say nothing of the fantasy expressed in his poem The Witch of Atlas.

Byron, although he wrote a Manfred, would appear, in his ideas of poetic theory expressed in Don Juan, to hold the poet close to the facts, for he says:

But then the fact's a fact—and 'tis the part  
Of a true poet to escape from fiction  
Whene'er he can; for there is little art  
In leaving verse more free from the restriction  
Of Truth than prose, unless to suit the mart  
For what is sometimes called poetic diction,  
And that outrageous appetite for lies  
Which Satan angles with for souls, like flies.<sup>3</sup>

He makes further suggestions to the same effect in his Hints from

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>2</sup> During the seventeenth century and early part of the eighteenth the field of the wonderful was closed territory to poets (cf. Saintsbury, vol. III, p. 25).

<sup>3</sup> Canto VIII: LXXXVI.



Horace, a Byronized version of the older poet's work, where Byron touches somewhat upon his predilection for satire in verse, a characteristic which removes him from Shelley. Although the latter did write a Peter Bell the Third and The Devil Walks, yet such works were rare with him, did not fit in with the natural bent of his genius, and were entirely foreign to his theories of poetry and its function. Byron says in this connection:

Poets and painters, as all artists know,  
May shoot a little with a lengthened bow;  
We claim this mutual mercy for our task,  
And grant in turn the pardon which we ask;  
But make not monsters spring from gentle dams—<sup>1</sup>  
Birds breed not vipers, tigers nurse not lambs.

Concerning the matter of love as material for poetry, Byron has expressed several opinions, some of them slightly at variance with others. In a letter written to John Murray, January 4, 1821, Byron says:

Unless it is Love, furious, criminal, and hapless, it ought not to make a tragic subject: when it is melting and maudlin, it does, but it ought not to do; it is then for the Gallery and second price boxes.<sup>2</sup>

In a previous letter to Murray, written July 17, 1820, Byron expresses himself thus: "Now, are not the passions the food and fuel  
<sup>3</sup>  
of poesy?" On Saturday, July 13, nine days after the letter to Murray first quoted, Byron makes this entry in his Extracts from a Diary:

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<sup>1</sup>

Hints from Horace, ll. 15-20.

<sup>2</sup>

Byron, Letters and Journals, vol. V, p. 218.

<sup>3</sup>

Ibid., p. 55.





I carried Teresa the Italian translation of Grillparzer's Sappho, which she promises to read. She quarrelled with me, because I said that love was not the loftiest theme for true tragedy; and, having the advantage of her native language, and natural female eloquence, she overcame my fewer arguments. I believe she was right. I must put more love into Sardanapalus than I intended.<sup>1</sup>

It is almost impossible to compare these contradictory statements with what Shelley expresses concerning the desirability of an idealized love for use as a poetic theme. The strongest impression one carries away from what Byron says in the above is the fact of a tribute to the persuasive powers of the Countess Guiccioli.

There are only two points in the ideas expressed by Keats on the subject-matter of poetry that will be considered at this time, the others being so inseparably bound up with the opinions he gives of the purpose of poetry that they must be discussed in that connection. One of the points of interest here, however, is his thought that the most commonplace subjects may be food for poetry, an idea in which he shows himself more nearly akin to what Wordsworth has said about this specific matter than to anything said by Shelley. In his sonnet On the Grasshopper and Cricket Keats says:

2

"The poetry of earth is never dead..." Shelley seems chiefly concerned with the poetry that proceeds from Heaven, although in his Hellas, he appears to have in mind a work that will touch more closely the affairs of every-day life.

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>

Keats, p. 35.





Keats's early work shows a line of demarcation drawn by him, if not an absolute antagonism, between poetry and philosophy, as may be evidenced by the well-known quotation:

Do not all charms fly  
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?<sup>1</sup>

A later period of Keats's work shows a change in his attitude toward philosophy. As has been pointed out in the last chapter, the question of any such antagonism as that expressed by Keats here does not disturb Shelley, chiefly because, according to his more extended definition of poetry, a philosopher might easily be a poet also.

But it is the purpose or end of poetry, that which poetry will accomplish, which is of chief interest to all the Romantics, and especially to Shelley. Enough has been said in the discussion of the Defence to show Shelley's conception of the ends which poetry will serve: he looks upon true poetry as a revitalizing and regenerating force in society, believing that a decline in poetic forms is synonymous with a decay in social manners and habits. Furthermore, poetry is never more to be desired, Shelley says, than at a time when the calculating principle is rampant in society. He would thus use poetry to drive the money-changers out of the temple. His reaction to the progress of material science has been pointed out in the last chapter, a progress which was to grow so disturbing to the

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<sup>1</sup>  
Lamia, Part II, ll. 229-230.



minds of the Victorians. Shelley senses the fact that such an advance in science may alter the external world, but may not affect the internal, the heart of mankind, in which Shelley, both as a poet and a critic, is most interested, and which poetry, operating in its own fashion, will change for the better.

Concerning the end of poetry, as he conceives it when applied to one of his own works, Shelley is very explicit in his statements, saying, in his Preface to The Revolt of Islam:

And, if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story shall not excite in the reader a generous impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, and interest profound and strong such as belongs to no meaner desires--let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes.

Yet Shelley does not forget that poetry pleases as well as instructs; in fact, it is the pleasing that makes the instruction possible, he says--the two ends are inseparably joined in his mind. One passage illustrating this might be quoted again:

Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits upon which it falls open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight.<sup>1</sup>

Delight, then, is, to Shelley, an essential characteristic of all poetry.

This idea of the pleasure that poetry can and should give occurs again and again in Wordsworth's writings, as may be shown by the following quotations:

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<sup>1</sup>

Defence, p. 9.





The end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure...<sup>1</sup>

The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man.<sup>2</sup>

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgement of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgement the more sincere because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves.<sup>3</sup>

It seems to be for Wordsworth, as for Shelley, an idealized pleasure which the poet should communicate.

Wordsworth's poet, ~~too~~, like Shelley's, will be impelled by a desire to find and express the truth (which, to Shelley, is synonymous with the beautiful and the good). The poet, to Wordsworth, is like the man of science in his passion for truth; but, unlike the scientist, he does not cherish it or love it in solitude. Rather, he expresses it with, and for, humanity.<sup>4</sup> The truth will always be his ideal; furthermore, he will know that "no words, which his fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those<sup>5</sup> which are the emanations of reality and truth." The thought here

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, p. 796 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 794.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 795.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 794.



is very similar to that which Shelley expresses in his Defence when he cautions the poet against embodying in his creations his own ideas of right and wrong; rather, Shelley would have him represent the indestructible rhythm and order of the universe.

Very strong in Wordsworth, too, is the idea of the ethical purpose which poetry will serve. In his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads he admits frankly that his poems are distinguished from the works of other writers by the fact that each of them has a worthy purpose. This conception of the end of poetry as ethical in its nature, an end realized in the production of work that is helpful to mankind, Wordsworth expresses very clearly here:

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when  
it administers comforts and breathes the spirit of religion...<sup>1</sup>

The similarity of these ideas to Shelley's is striking; in the Defence Shelley claims for poetry a divine origin, also says: "It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our  
<sup>2</sup>  
own..."

One other resemblance to Shelley might be noted in Wordsworth's looking upon poetry as a means of escape, a view which he expresses in these lines:

So was it then with me, and so will be  
With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm  
Of those abstractions to a mind beset  
With images and haunted by herself,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 807 (Essay Supplementary to the Preface).

<sup>2</sup> Defence, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> The Prelude, Book VI, ll. 157-160.





This escape, Shelley does not limit to the poet. He says: "But poetry defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions."<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge, as shown before (see quotation on page 183), makes the communication of pleasure an essential function of poetry. His definition of poetry requires for this type of writing "intellectual pleasure as its object," and demands, as its end, "pleasure from the whole consistent with a consciousness of pleasure from the component parts..." This type of pleasure, as has been pointed out, the Athenian drama gave to Shelley. The definition of Coleridge's under consideration now is only nine lines in length, yet the word "pleasure " is mentioned four times.

Like Shelley and Wordsworth, Coleridge would have the poet animated by a desire for truth, but he does not stress truth so much on its ethical side. Truth, to Coleridge, would appear more a conforming to reality than to an abstract, idealized standard, although he has something to say on the latter point also. In speaking of the poetic power which exists in Venus and Adonis, he expresses an admiration for the truth observed in its adherence to details, saying:

It is throughout as if a superior spirit more intuitive, more intimately conscious, even than the characters themselves, not only of every outward look and act, but of the flux and reflux of the mind in all its subtlest thoughts and feelings,

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1

Defence, p. 35.



were placing the whole before our view: himself meanwhile unparticipating in the passions, and actuated only by that pleasurable excitement, which had resulted from the energetic fervor of his own spirit in so vividly exhibiting what it had so accurately and profoundly contemplated.<sup>1</sup>

This quotation shows Coleridge's idea of the detachment necessary in the production of a great work of art, as well as truth seen through the eyes of the logician and metaphysician.

In his consideration of a work of art Coleridge does not, like Shelley, identify the beautiful with the good, but expresses a recognition of different aesthetic values. He says:

The Useful, the Agreeable, the Beautiful, and the Good, are distinguishable. You are wrong in resolving Beauty into Expression or Interest; it is quite distinct; indeed, it is opposite, although not contrary. Beauty is an immediate presence, between (inter) which and the beholder nihil est.<sup>2</sup>

When Coleridge considers poetry, however, from the point of view of its purpose, he seems favorably disposed toward the end of benefit to mankind, as may be seen in the following quotation:

The ideal of earnest poetry consists in the union and harmonious melting down, and fusion of the sensual into the spiritual,—of man as an animal into man as a power of reason and self-government.<sup>3</sup>

In his discussion of the poetry of love Shelley mentions several authors who have achieved through their work "that sublimest victory over sensuality and force."<sup>4</sup> In this connection it is sig-

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, pp. 376-377.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. VI, Table Talk, p. 497 (January 1, 1834).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., vol. IV, Lectures upon Shakespeare and Other Dramatists, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Defence, p. 24.





nificant also that Coleridge, in lines addressed to Wordsworth, speaks of him admiringly as "Friend of the wise! and teacher of the good!"<sup>1</sup> What Coleridge thinks, however, about didactic poetry in general will be discussed in another section.

Byron has much less to say than Shelley about the effects of poetry. He agrees with the other Romantics in the idea that pleasure should be the end of effective writing, saying: "A man may praise and praise, but no one recollects but that which pleases—at least, in composition."<sup>2</sup> His Byronized form of Horace's work contains the following rendition of two lines from the Ars Poetica:

Two objects always should the Poet move,  
Or one or both,—to please or to improve.<sup>3</sup>

Another interesting idea of Byron's concerning the effects of poetry is seen in a passage from Childe Harold:

The Beings of the Mind are not of clay:  
Essentially immortal, they create  
And multiply in us a brighter ray  
And more beloved existence: that which Fate  
Prohibits to dull life in this our state  
Of mortal bondage, by these Spirits supplied,  
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;  
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,  
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

Such is the refuge of our youth and age—  
The first from Hope, the last <sup>from</sup> vacancy;  
And this wan feeling peoples many a page—  
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye:  
Yet there are things whose strong reality  
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues

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<sup>1</sup> To a Gentleman, l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Byron, Letters and Journals, vol. II, p. 301 (from a letter to Thomas Moore, December 8, 1813).

<sup>3</sup> Hints from Horace, ll. 531-532.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

REPORT OF THE  
COMMISSIONER OF THE  
BUREAU OF CHEMISTRY  
FOR THE YEAR 1908

ALFRED C. COVEY, CHIEF  
OF THE BUREAU OF CHEMISTRY  
AND  
JAMES H. MANN, CHIEF  
OF THE DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

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AGRIC	



More beautiful than our fantastic sky,  
And the strange constellations which the Muse  
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:<sup>1</sup>

Byron is looking upon poetry here as a method of escape from "mortal bondage," an idea similar to that of Shelley, who believes that poetry can release one from bondage to the "accident of surrounding impressions." Furthermore, it can give something better; according to Byron, it can "multiply in us a brighter ray..." According to Shelley, the drama, when it contains poetry, acts as a mirror, "which collects the brightest rays of human nature...touches them with majesty and beauty, and multiplies all that it reflects..."<sup>2</sup> In this quotation from Byron there is found one of the expressions, comparatively few in his work, of an idealized conception of poetry approaching that of Shelley.

The idea of poetry's being able to give pleasure, Keats also expresses, saying:

Sweet are the pleasures that to verse belong,  
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song;<sup>3</sup>

Not only will poetry give pleasure, however; it will, according to Keats, add zest to the business of living. "The great beauty of poetry is that it makes everything in every place interesting."<sup>4</sup> The pleasure which every work of art will bring, Keats expresses in the well-known lines:

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<sup>1</sup>

Canto IV: V-VI.

<sup>2</sup>

Defence, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>

Epistle to George Felton Mathew, ll. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup>

Keats, p. 400 (from a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, September 20, 1819).

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A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
 Its loveliness increases; it will never  
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.<sup>1</sup>

This same work of beauty will also lighten care and sorrow, Keats says:

yes, in spite of all,  
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
 From our dark spirits.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, it will serve as a means of escape, a refuge for the poet himself, who admits:

At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain  
 When some bright thought has darted through my brain:  
 Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure  
 Than if I'd brought to light a hidden treasure.<sup>3</sup>

Poetry, however, to Keats, as to Shelley, will do other things as well; especially will it influence man to action, as Keats shows in these lines:

These are the living pleasures of the bard:  
 But richer far posterity's award.  
 What does he murmur with his latest breath,  
 While his proud eye looks through the film of death?  
 'What though I leave this dull and earthly mould,  
 Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold  
 With after times.—The patriot shall feel  
 My stern alarm, and unsheath his steel;  
 Or in the senate thunder out my numbers,  
 To startle princes from their easy slumbers.  
 The sage will mingle with each moral theme  
 My happy thoughts sententious; he will teem  
 With lofty periods when my verses fire him,  
 And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire him.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Endymion, Book I, ll. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ll. 11-13.

<sup>3</sup> Epistle to My Brother George, ll. 113-116.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ll. 67-80.





Some of this recalls Shelley's famous line "Poets are the unac-  
<sup>1</sup>  
 knowledged legislators of the world."

All the five Romantics quoted agree in the idea that poetry has for an end the giving of pleasure, as well as the influencing of mankind in other beneficial ways. Yet, what is their attitude toward didactic poetry, that which has for its specific and obvious purpose the direct instruction or moral benefit of its readers?

Shelley's attitude in this matter, as expressed in the Defence (see Thesis, pp. 78 -79 ), is very clear: he believes that poetry acts in a different way from that in which the ethical sciences act, that the highest type of poetry does not inculcate morals directly, and that those poets who seek to do the latter are artists of an inferior order. He expresses admiration for Milton because of the latter's "bold neglect of a direct moral purpose."<sup>2</sup> In his Preface to The Cenci he says, concerning the treatment of the drama: "There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose." He criticizes dramas which have for their purpose "a weak attempt to teach cer-  
<sup>3</sup>  
 tain doctrines, which the writer considers as moral truths..."

The difference between attempting to produce an effect directly, a method characteristic of the moralist; and indirectly, af-

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<sup>1</sup>  
Defence, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid., p. 16.



ter the manner of the artist, Shelley shows clearly in the following passage quoted from his Preface to Prometheus Unbound:

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, 'a passion for reforming the world:' what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust...

No one who reads this passage or those from the Defence can be in any doubt as to Shelley's position on the question of didactic poetry.

As has been shown, Wordsworth, like Shelley, is much interested in the producing of poetry that will benefit mankind; he does not, however, in the theories he has expressed of poetry, make the distinction that Shelley makes between the method of the artist and that of systems which have as their direct and specific purpose the inculcating of morals. There is one passage of his that touches upon this matter. After expressing his disapproval of various types of literature produced during his time, Wordsworth says:





When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.<sup>1</sup>

If Wordsworth is referring, in the last few lines, to efforts of future poets—and he seems to be making this reference because of the expressed comparison of their efforts with his own—he is urging something different from Shelley's method of procedure, for a "systematic opposition" of poetry to evil would not be in line with Shelley's convictions. Yet, in all fairness to what Wordsworth has said on the matter, it is necessary to put beside the passage quoted above another which contains his idea of the purpose of poetry. He says, of poetry, in these lines:

its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal.<sup>2</sup>

Such a purpose, of course, is entirely consistent with what Shelley has said concerning the end of poetry, and the method of oper-

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, p. 792 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 794.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the system has solutions for all values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  if the function  $f(x)$  is continuous and has a bounded derivative. The second part of the paper is devoted to a detailed study of the properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . The third part of the paper is devoted to a study of the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) have the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (2).

The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) have the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (2). The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a study of the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) have the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (2).

The eighth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . The ninth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) have the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (2).

The tenth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ .

The eleventh part of the paper is devoted to a study of the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) have the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system of equations (2). The twelfth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system of equations (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ .

ating implied here is not one with which Shelley would quarrel.

It is, perhaps, not so much what Wordsworth says about didactic poetry as what he does that has the most bearing on this discussion. Readers of Wordsworth are familiar with the didactic tag added to many of his poems, noticeable in The Old Cumberland Beggar, for instance, and Resolution and Independence, also in the last part of Lines Written in Early Spring.

If this belief from heaven be sent,  
If such be Nature's holy plan,  
Have I not reason to lament  
What man has made of man?

This practice—which is not so obvious in many of his best poems—undoubtedly grew out of his great zeal to be regarded as a benefactor of mankind, as well as out of the high conception which he held of his art. He looked upon himself as a high priest with a sacred duty to perform, as may be shown by the following passage:

Thus far, O Friend! did I, not used to make  
A present joy the matter of a song,  
Pour forth that day my soul in measured strains  
That would not be forgotten, and are here  
Recorded: to the open fields I told  
A prophecy: poetic numbers came  
Spontaneously to clothe in priestly robe  
A renovated spirit singled out,  
Such hope was mine, for holy services.<sup>1</sup>

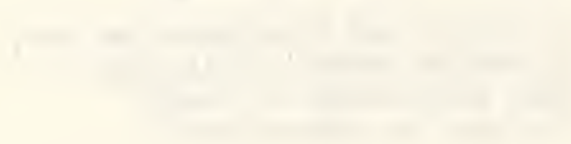
When Coleridge called Wordsworth "teacher of the Good," he was showing an appreciation of the circumstances of the case and paying the older poet a compliment that was undoubtedly most welcome to the other. An interesting thing about the whole matter is that

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<sup>1</sup>

The Prelude, Book I, ll. 46-54.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the problem is not only a scientific one, but also a philosophical one. The scientific aspect of the problem is concerned with the question of how life arose from non-life. The philosophical aspect is concerned with the question of whether life is a necessary part of the universe or whether it is a mere accident.



The second part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the chemical aspects of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the chemical aspects of the problem are very complex and involve many different factors. The chemical aspects of the problem are concerned with the question of how the various chemical compounds that make up life arose from non-life.



The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the biological aspects of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the biological aspects of the problem are also very complex and involve many different factors. The biological aspects of the problem are concerned with the question of how the various biological processes that make up life arose from non-life.

APPENDIX



in those poems which are considered by the majority of critics as Wordsworth's greatest, Tintern Abbey, for instance, there is the least obvious didacticism; in other words, the older poet was successful in practice where he followed Shelley in theory.

Coleridge, in both his theory and practice, is much closer to Shelley in his position on the question of didacticism in poetry, as may be shown by the following quotation:

Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired the Ancient Mariner very much, but that there were two faults in it,—it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much; and that the only or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights' tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up, and says he must kill the aforesaid merchant, because one of the dates--shells, had, it seemed, put out the eye of the geni's son.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to remember in this connection that the idea of the moral in The Ancient Mariner is supposed to have been suggested to Coleridge by Wordsworth.

Coleridge, moreover, objects to Wordsworth's method of inculcating moral truths, feeling that such a method contravenes the real purpose of genuine poetry:

In real life, and, I trust, even in my imagination, I honor a virtuous and wise man, without reference to the presence or absence of artificial advantages. Whether in the person

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1

Coleridge, vol. VI, Table Talk, p. 324 (May 31, 1830).

The first of these is the fact that the  
the second is the fact that the  
the third is the fact that the

the fourth is the fact that the  
the fifth is the fact that the  
the sixth is the fact that the

the seventh is the fact that the  
the eighth is the fact that the  
the ninth is the fact that the

the tenth is the fact that the  
the eleventh is the fact that the  
the twelfth is the fact that the

the thirteenth is the fact that the  
the fourteenth is the fact that the  
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the sixteenth is the fact that the  
the seventeenth is the fact that the  
the eighteenth is the fact that the

the nineteenth is the fact that the  
the twentieth is the fact that the  
the twenty-first is the fact that the

the twenty-second is the fact that the  
the twenty-third is the fact that the  
the twenty-fourth is the fact that the

the twenty-fifth is the fact that the  
the twenty-sixth is the fact that the  
the twenty-seventh is the fact that the



of an armed baron, a laurelled bard, or of an old Peddler, or still older Leech-gatherer, the same qualities of head and heart must claim the same reverence. And even in poetry I am not conscious, that I have ever suffered my feelings to be disturbed or offended by any thoughts or images, which the poet himself has not presented.

But yet I object, nevertheless, and for the following reasons. First, because the object in view, as an immediate object, belongs to the moral philosopher, and would be pursued, not only more appropriately, but in my opinion with far greater probability of success, in sermons or moral essays, than in an elevated poem. It seems, indeed, to destroy the main fundamental distinction, not only between a poem and prose, but even between philosophy and works of fiction, inasmuch as it proposes truth for its immediate object, instead of pleasure... For the communication of pleasure is the introductory means by which alone the poet must expect to moralize his readers.<sup>1</sup>

The last sentence, indeed, might have been written by Shelley himself, so close is it to the latter's conception of the way in which poetry should communicate moral truths. The distinction, of course, that Coleridge mentions between poetry and prose is not one that Shelley, in accordance with his broader view of poetry, accepts.

As far as Byron and the question of morality in poetry are concerned, he seems to be in continual fear that people will call his poems immoral, probably because of the criticism he has already received on this score. He mentions the matter in a few lines, the tone of which is interesting:

I therefore do denounce all amorous writing,  
Except in such a way as not to attract;  
Plain--simple--short, and by no means inviting,  
But with a moral to each error tacked,  
Formed rather for instructing than delighting,  
And with all passions in their turn attacked,

---

<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., vol. III, Biographia Literaria, pp. 471-472.



Now, if my Pegasus should not be shod ill,  
This poem will become a moral model.<sup>1</sup>

The source of this quotation, as well as its general tone, strengthens the reader's impression that the author was writing with his tongue in his cheek. It is interesting to know, however, that Byron heatedly defends Don Juan against any suggestion that it is an immoral poem, saying:

I maintain that it is the most moral of poems; but if people won't discover the moral, that is their fault, not mine.<sup>2</sup>

Byron agrees with Shelley in the idea that it is not the place of poetry to present a reasoned system of morals, as may be shown in the following:

'Licentiousness!'--there is more real mischief and sapping licentiousness in a single French prose novel, in a Moravian hymn, or a German comedy, than in all the actual poetry that ever was penned or poured forth, since the rhapsodies of Orpheus. The sentimental anatomy of Rousseau and Mad<sup>e</sup> de S. are far more formidable than any quantity of verse. They are so, because they sap the principles by reasoning upon the passions; whereas poetry is in itself passion, and does not systematize. It assails, but does not argue; it may be wrong, but it does not assume pretensions to Optimism.<sup>3</sup>

Keats does not have much to say on the specific subject of didacticism in poetry, although he does object to Wordsworth's method of writing, expressing these opinions concerning it:

It may be said that we ought to read our contemporaries, that Wordsworth, etc. should have their due from us. But for the sake of a few fine imaginative or domestic passages, are

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<sup>1</sup> Don Juan, Canto V: II.

<sup>2</sup> Byron, vol. IV, Letters and Journals, p. 279 (from a letter to John Murray, February 1, 1819).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., vol. V, p. 582 (from a letter to John Murray, March 25, 1821).

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we to be bullied into a certain Philosophy, engendered in the whims of an Egoist? Every man has his speculations, but every man does not brood and peacock over them till he makes a false coinage and deceives himself... We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us, and if we do not agree, seems to put its hands into its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself—but with its subject.<sup>1</sup>

In another passage expressing his theory of poetry, Keats shows himself in sympathy with Shelley's conception of the way in which a work of art containing the poetical element will act: "The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth..."<sup>2</sup> Shelley says: "Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed..."<sup>3</sup>

Good poetry will be that, in Shelley's opinion, which produces these results. Enough has been said in the discussion of the Defence to show what Shelley's idea of the highest type of poetry is. One passage might be quoted ~~again~~, epitomizing as it does his feelings on this subject:

All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially. Veil after veil may be undrawn, and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed. A great poem is a fountain for ever overflowing with

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<sup>1</sup> Keats, p. 285 (from a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, February 3, 1818).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 277 (from a letter to George and Thomas Keats, December 22, 1817).

<sup>3</sup> Defence, p. 34.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the problem is not only a scientific one, but also a philosophical one. The scientific aspect of the problem is concerned with the question of how life arose from non-life. The philosophical aspect is concerned with the question of whether life is a necessary part of the universe or whether it is a mere accident.

The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various theories of the origin of life. These theories are divided into two main groups: the theory of spontaneous generation and the theory of biogenesis. The theory of spontaneous generation is the older of the two and is based on the idea that life can arise from non-life. The theory of biogenesis is the newer of the two and is based on the idea that life can only arise from pre-existing life.

The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the evidence for the theory of biogenesis. This evidence is of two kinds: direct evidence and indirect evidence. Direct evidence is evidence that is obtained from experiments. Indirect evidence is evidence that is obtained from observations of the natural world. The direct evidence for the theory of biogenesis is very strong. It is based on the fact that life has never been shown to arise from non-life in any experiment.

The indirect evidence for the theory of biogenesis is also very strong. It is based on the fact that life is everywhere in the natural world. It is found in all parts of the universe, from the most remote corners of space to the most crowded cities of the earth. This fact is very difficult to explain if life is a mere accident. It is much more easily explained if life is a necessary part of the universe.

The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the implications of the theory of biogenesis. These implications are of two kinds: scientific and philosophical. The scientific implications are concerned with the question of how life is related to the rest of the universe. The philosophical implications are concerned with the question of whether life has any special status in the universe.

The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a conclusion. It is shown that the theory of biogenesis is the only theory that is consistent with the evidence. It is also shown that the theory of biogenesis has important implications for our understanding of the universe and for our place in it.

the waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person and one age has exhausted all of its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and an unconceived delight.<sup>1</sup>

No one else among the Romantics has expressed more rhapsodically the idea of the exalted nature of true poetry.

Aside from the ideas of Wordsworth's already discussed concerning the nature of poetry--its being delightful, truthful, and ethical--there are one or two other things he has said concerning the qualities of good poetry that might be mentioned at this point. In describing an incident of his childhood, the finding of the body of a man drowned in a lake near his home, he says that this spectacle did not arouse fear in him,

for my inner eye had seen  
Such sights before, among the shining streams  
Of faëry land, the forest of romance.  
This spirit hallowed the sad spectacle  
With decoration of ideal grace;  
A dignity, a smoothness, like the works  
Of Grecian art, and purest poesy.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to holding up the classic form of art as an ideal, the passage is interesting in its revelation of Wordsworth's idea that the inner spirit can turn horror into beauty--an idea similar to that of Shelley's<sup>1</sup> concerning the effect on a subject of poetic treatment. Another quality mentioned by Wordsworth--not discussed to any extent by Shelley--as a requisite in good poetry is simplicity.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> The Prelude, Book V, ll. 453-459.





In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments.<sup>1</sup>

It is only to be expected that Wordsworth will stress the quality of simplicity, when consideration is given to his specific theories expressed in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads concerning the desirability of representing in poetry subjects drawn from common life and using language close to the real language of men.<sup>2</sup>

This quality of simplicity, together with the other characteristics of good poetry mentioned by Milton, Coleridge also accepts, saying of verse:

...it ought to be simple, sensuous, and impassioned; that is to say, single in conception, abounding in sensible images, and informing them all with the spirit of the mind.<sup>3</sup>

His definition of simplicity, however, is concerned with that quality of a work which will produce a single effect—a characteristic of poetry which Shelley also admires, as seen by his remarks on the Athenian drama. In his analysis of this principle Coleridge remarks that an observation of it "precludes...every affectation and morbid peculiarity." Shelley, in his Defence, criticizes the classical or domestic tragedy because its authors affect sen-

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<sup>1</sup>

Wordsworth, p. 807 (Essay Supplementary to the Preface).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wordsworth, p. 797 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

<sup>3</sup>

Coleridge, vol. VI, Table Talk, p. 276 (May 8, 1824).

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timents that they do not really feel. The second quality, seriousness, according to Coleridge:

...insures that framework of objectivity, that definiteness and articulation of imagery, and that modification of the images themselves, without which poetry becomes flattened into mere didactics of practice, or evaporated into a hazy, unthoughtful day-dreaming...<sup>1</sup>

These comments show a feature of Coleridge's criticism that seems to distinguish it from Shelley's, namely, more of an analytical and less of a rhapsodic quality. Of the third characteristic, passion, Coleridge says: it "provides that neither thought nor imagery shall be simply objective, but that the passio vera of humanity shall warm and animate both."<sup>2</sup>

The element of originality also, Coleridge feels, is indispensable in good poetry. In speaking of the young poets of his time, he says:

Poetic taste, dexterity in composition, and ingenious imitation, often produce poems that are very promising in appearance. But genius, or the power of doing something new, is another thing.<sup>3</sup>

Going further into an analysis of those qualities which, he believes, show promise of power in a young poet—an analysis more minute than is found in Shelley's criticism—Coleridge comments on the minor poems of Shakespeare:

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., vol. IV, Lectures upon Shakespeare and Other Dramatists, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid., vol. VI, Table Talk, p. 300 (April 30, 1830).

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In the VENUS AND ADONIS, the first and most obvious excellence is the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaptation to the subject; and the power displayed in varying the march of the words without passing into a loftier and more majestic rhythm than was demanded by the thoughts, or permitted by the propriety of preserving a sense of melody predominant.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the sonnets, Coleridge says:

These sonnets, like the Venus and Adonis, and the Rape of Lucrece, are characterized by boundless fertility and labored condensation of thought, with perfection and sweetness in rhythm and metre. These are the essentials in the budding of a great poet. Afterward, habit and the consciousness of power teach more ease--praecipitandum liberum spiritum.<sup>2</sup>

In the analysis that he makes of the excellencies and defects of Wordsworth's poetry, one finds the best expression of Coleridge's ideas concerning the characteristics of good poetry, the whole passage giving further proof of his acuteness as a critic. The excellencies, he says, are the following:

1 ...an austere purity of language both grammatically and logically; in short a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning.<sup>3</sup>

2 ...correspondent weight and sanity of the Thoughts and Sentiments,--won not from books; but from the poet's own meditative observation.<sup>4</sup>

3 ...the sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs: the frequent curiosa felicitas of his diction.<sup>5</sup>

4 ...the perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., vol. III, Biographia Literaria, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. VI, Table Talk, p. 453 (May 14, 1833).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., vol. III, Biographia Literaria, p. 485.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 487.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 491.

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RESEARCH REPORT

1. TITLE: *Study of the properties of the*  
*newly discovered particles*

2. AUTHOR: *Dr. J. D. Jackson*  
3. DATE: *1964*

4. ABSTRACT: *This report describes the results of a study of the properties of the newly discovered particles. The study was carried out using the methods of...*

5. REFERENCES: *See also the following references:*  
*1. J. D. Jackson, Phys. Rev. 149, 1300 (1962).*  
*2. J. D. Jackson, Phys. Rev. 150, 1300 (1963).*

6. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: *This report is available to the public without charge.*  
7. SUBJECT TERMS: *Physics, Chemistry, Particles*



and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives the physiognomic expression to all the works of nature.<sup>1</sup>

5 ... a meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility; a sympathy with man as man; the sympathy indeed of a contemplator, rather than a fellow-sufferer or co-mate (spectator, haud particeps) but of a contemplator, from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of the nature; no injuries of wind or weather, of toil, or even of ignorance, wholly disguise the human face divine.<sup>2</sup>

6 ...Last, and pre-eminently I challenge for this poet the gift of Imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word...in imaginative power, he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own.<sup>3</sup>

The truth which Coleridge admires in Wordsworth's images suggests Shelley's idea of a poem as "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth."<sup>4</sup> Also the "sympathy with man as man" which Coleridge mentions here reminds one of the emphasis which Shelley, in his discussion of the effects of the imagination, places on the necessity of one person's being able to put himself in the position of another in order to apprehend thoroughly the great secret of morals—love. Coleridge and Shelley are also similar in their stressing the importance of the imagination; here, Coleridge speaks of it in connection with the poet; Shelley emphasizes the necessity of it in both the poet and his reader.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 493.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 495-496.

<sup>4</sup> Defence, p. 8.

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In his consideration of what constitutes good poetry Byron, different from Shelley, has much to say about the defects of his contemporaries, speaking contemptuously of those whom he calls "the Lakers," and "their under-sect<sup>1</sup> (which some one has maliciously called the 'Cockney School')," attributing to them vulgarity (with the exception of Wordsworth and "the higher of the Lake School"). He says in this connection:

In the present case, I speak of writing, not of persons... Far be it from me to presume that there ever was, or can be, such a thing as an aristocracy of poets; but there is a nobility of thought and of style, open to all stations, and derived partly from talent, and partly from education, —which is to be found in Shakespeare, and Pope, and Burns, no less than in Dante and Alfieri, but which is nowhere to be perceived in the mock birds and bards of Mr. Hunt's little chorus.<sup>2</sup>

Byron also says that "gentlemanliness" will never make a poet or<sup>3</sup> a poem entirely, but that neither will be anything without it.

Many of his ideas concerning the excellencies of poetry seem to have their source in his admiration for Pope, whom he calls<sup>4</sup> "the most perfect of our poets, and the purest of our moralists."

In this connection he says:

He who can reconcile poetry with truth and wisdom, is the only true 'poet' in its real sense, 'the maker,' 'the creator,'—why must this mean the 'liar,' the 'feigner,' the 'tale-teller?' A man may make and create better things than these.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Byron, Letters and Journals, vol. V, p. 587 (from a letter to John Murray, March 25, 1821).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 591.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 559 (from a letter to John Murray, February 7, 1821).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 559-560.





In another passage he praises Pope for his sense, harmony, effect, Imagination, passion, and Invention.<sup>1</sup> This extreme admiration for Pope distinguishes Byron from Shelley, as well as from the other Romantics: Pope is the measuring-rod used by him in most of his criticisms.

Other qualities which Byron considers characteristic of good poetry might be mentioned here. Following the ideas of the older critic, he says, in his Hints from Horace: a good poem may contain irregularities; it must have feeling; it must stick to reality; it must create an illusion.<sup>2 3 4 5</sup> His further sympathy with the precepts laid down by Horace, and a further indication of his distance from the other Romantic critics, are seen in these statements: "Art is not inferior to nature for poetical purposes... in the hands of a poet art will not be found less ornamental than nature."<sup>6</sup> Also:

Away, then, with this cant about nature, and 'invariable principles of poetry!' A great artist will make a block of stone as sublime as a mountain, and a good poet can imbue a pack of cards with more poetry than inhabits the forests of America. It is the business and the proof of a poet to give the lie to the proverb, and sometimes to 'make a silken purse

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., vol. IV, pp. 169-170 (from a letter to John Murray, September 15, 1817).

<sup>2</sup> Ll. 413-422.

<sup>3</sup> Ll. 137-144.

<sup>4</sup> Ll. 212-262.

<sup>5</sup> Ll. 537-540.

<sup>6</sup> Byron, Letters and Journals, vol. V, p. 551 (from a letter to John Murray, February 7, 1821).



out of a sow's ear,' and to conclude with another homely proverb, 'a good workman will not find fault with his tools.'<sup>1</sup>

In another passage he approaches Shelley's conception of great poetry more closely than he does Shelley's method of attaining the effect produced by such poetry. Also, the last part of the quotation shows him depreciating two qualities that were noticeable characteristics of Romantic poetry.

In my mind, the highest of all poetry is ethical poetry, as the highest of all earthly objects must be moral truth... And if ethics have made a philosopher the first of men, and have not been disdained as an adjunct to his Gospel by the Deity himself, are we to be told that ethical poetry, or didactic poetry, or by whatever name you term it, whose object is to make men better and wiser, is not the very first order of poetry... It is the fashion of the day to lay great stress upon what they call 'imagination' and 'invention,' the two commonest of qualities: an Irish peasant with a little whiskey in his head will imagine and invent more than would furnish forth a modern poem.<sup>2</sup>

It would be difficult, however, to conceive of such a peasant as the one described embodying Shelley's concept of the imagination. One comment on Byron's criticism, it is necessary to make, and that is not only its lack of system (which fault might be imputed to Shelley also), but its lack of consistency. As an illustration, he depreciates, in the quotation given above, the two qualities for which he has praised Pope, Imagination and Invention. The same inconsistency is noticeable in his remarks on Wordsworth, whom he calls "so damned a fool"<sup>3</sup> at one time and "a great poet"<sup>4</sup> at another.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 557.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 554.

<sup>3</sup>Byron, Poetry, vol. VII, p. 63, "Epilogue," l. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., vol. IV, p. 46 (quoted from a note by E. H. Coleridge, Editor).



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Such an extreme variation of judgment is not characteristic of Shelley's criticism.

That good poetry shall give pleasure has already been mentioned as one of the characteristics Keats demands of it. The youthful Keats, in contrast to Shelley, stresses feeling, emotion, what he calls "sensation" as an essential of poetry; his more mature philosophy demands something more.<sup>1</sup> His famous Mansion of Life letter shows this.<sup>2</sup> Here he expresses an admiration for that type of poetry written by Wordsworth which is explorative of the dark passages of human life. He adds:

...Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them--He is a genius and superior to us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries and shed a light in them-- Here I must think Wordsworth is deeper than Milton, though I think it has depended more upon the general and gregarious advance of intellect, than individual greatness of Mind-- From the Paradise Lost and the other Works of Milton, I hope it is not presuming, even between ourselves, to say, that his philosophy, human and divine, may be tolerably understood by one not much advanced in years... He did not think into the human heart as Wordsworth has done--Yet Milton as a Philosopher had sure as great powers as Wordsworth--<sup>3</sup>

One receives the impression from this letter that Keats considers great poetry the kind that will not turn aside from human misery, but will search after truth, a concept similar to Shelley's. One poem of Wordsworth's, Keats criticizes, because it is a "kind of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. John Thorpe's The Mind of John Keats, also J. Middleton Murry's Keats and Shakespeare for excellent discussions of this point.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Keats, pp. 301-303 (from a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, May 3, 1818).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 302.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups.

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6. The sixth part of the report deals with the future of the country and the position of the various groups.

sketchy intellectual landscape, not a search after truth..."<sup>1</sup> In  
a letter to Haydon, Keats remarks:

I am convinced that there are three things to rejoice at  
in this Age--The Excursion, Your Pictures, and Hazlitt's  
depth of Taste.<sup>2</sup>

In another letter Keats speaks of Don Juan as "Byron's last flash  
<sup>3</sup>  
poem."

In addition to what may be inferred from these remarks of  
his concerning the merits and demerits of his contemporaries, there  
is more direct evidence of what Keats believes good poetry should  
be. In one of his letters he gives a statement of what he calls  
the "axioms" of poetry:

In poetry I have a few axioms, and you will see how far I  
am from their centre.

1st. I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess,  
not by singularity; It should strike the reader as a word-  
ing of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remem-  
brance.

2d. Its touches of beauty should never be half-way,  
thereby making the reader breathless, instead of content.  
The rise, the progress, the setting of Imagery should, like  
the sun, come natural to him, shine over him, and set soberly,  
although in magnificence, leaving him in the luxury of twi-  
light. But it is easier to think what poetry should be,  
than to write it--And this leads me to

Another axiom--That if poetry comes not as naturally as  
the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all.--<sup>4</sup>

Keats's recommending the avoiding of "singularity" is similar in

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., p. 272 (from a letter to Benjamin Bailey, about Novem-  
ber 1, 1817).

<sup>2</sup>

Keats, pp. 279-280 (from a letter to Benjamin Robert Haydon,  
January 10, 1818).

<sup>3</sup>

Ibid., p. 397 (from a letter to George and Georgiana Keats,  
September 18, 1819).

<sup>4</sup>

Ibid., p. 289 (from a letter to John Taylor, February 27, 1818).





thought to Shelley's disapproval of affectations. Also, the "content" which Keats mentions as the effect of good poetry on the reader is reminiscent of the "exalted calm" which, in the opinion of Shelley, will pervade those who behold the tragedies of the Athenian poets.<sup>1</sup>

Such, then, is the nature of poetry, according to the Romantics considered in this discussion. Each has defined it as it appeared to him, expressed ideas as to what its subject-matter should be, indicated what seems the purpose or end of this kind of writing, and stated what are, in his opinion, the characteristics of good poetry. What do these same men have to say about the creator of this type of art? Is he set off in some way from the rest of mankind? Are there certain attributes of temperament and mentality that go to make up a poet? What are the features peculiar to him or to his genius?

Shelley gives, in his Defence, rather complete answers to all these questions, answers that show the same idealistic conception of the poet that he holds of the poet's work. The man who is able to create poetry has the clearest and most intuitive perception of the inner rhythm and harmony of things, of what Shelley calls "the indestructible order"; he is a man of delicate sensibilities, of "enlarged imagination," of "refined organisation." Furthermore, since a poet "is the author to others of the highest wisdom, pleasure, virtue and glory, so he ought personally to be the happiest,

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<sup>1</sup>Defence, p. 15.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country.

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9. The ninth part deals with the conclusion of the report.

10. The tenth part deals with the appendix of the report.

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13. The thirteenth part deals with the list of figures of the report.

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the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men."<sup>1</sup> This will be true, according to Shelley, even though, in the intervals between his moments of inspiration, the poet becomes as other men.

Answers to these questions being considered are also found in works of Shelley's other than the Defence. In Alastor the poet is pictured as being "gentle, and brave, and generous,—" he had drunk of the "fountains of divine philosophy," also of the "sacred past." He was a passionate lover of nature, and felt at home in "the wild," where he would give "bloodless food" to the doves and squirrels, and even the untamed animals would stop to gaze upon him. He obeyed the guiding power of his own high thoughts, visited the "awful ruins of the days of old" and saw there "The thrilling secrets of the birth of time."<sup>2</sup> He was altogether "the child of grace and genius," as well as "the brave, the gentle, and the beautiful."<sup>3</sup>

Also, since a poet is the child of a divine race, he should not be subjected, Shelley says, to the lure of material temptations:

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power  
A poet's free and heavenly mind:  
If bright chameleons should devour  
Any food but beams and wind,

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<sup>1</sup>

Defence, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>

Cf. ll. 58-128.

<sup>3</sup>

ll. 689-690.



They would grow as earthly soon  
 As their brother lizards are.  
 Children of a sunnier star,  
 Spirits from beyond the moon,  
 Oh, refuse the boon!<sup>1</sup>

Such a staining with earthly taints would be unbecoming the ideal poet, for:

He is a portion of the loveliness  
 Which once he made more lovely:<sup>2</sup>

Shelley has something to say, too, concerning the peculiar character of a poet's temperament, as may be seen in the following passage:

Poets—the best of them, are a very cameleonic race; they take the colour not only of what they feed on, but of the very leaves under which they pass.<sup>3</sup>

This simile, Shelley has used once before; therefore one can conclude that it represents a fairly settled conviction in his mind as to the nature of the poetic type. He touches upon the same thought, indirectly, in another passage:

A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both... Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age.<sup>4</sup>

There is difficulty in really understanding the poet and his work, for, as Shelley says:

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<sup>1</sup> An Exhortation, ll. 18-27.

<sup>2</sup> Adonais, ll. 379-380. Although these lines refer specifically to Keats, they seem a part of Shelley's idealized conception of the nature of any real poet.

<sup>3</sup> Prose Works, vol. II, p. 329 (from a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, July 13, 1821).

<sup>4</sup> Preface to Prometheus Unbound.





The poet and the man are two different natures; though they exist together, they may be unconscious of each other, and incapable of deciding on each other's powers and efforts by any reflex act.<sup>1</sup>

The poet, however, will meet with disappointment in his un-failing search after a prototype of ideal human nature if he shows himself too self-centered, a concept Shelley reveals in Alastor, saying in the Preface to this poem:

The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centered seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that Power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief, these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse.

From this passage one can infer that Shelley was never a proponent of the "art for art's sake" theory, because he states that it is the self-centered seclusion of the Poet that brings him to ruin.

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<sup>1</sup> Prose Works, vol. II, p. 330 (from a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, July 19, 1821).

1. The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the fresh air. It felt like I had been in a bubble for hours. The sun was shining brightly, and the birds were singing. It was a beautiful day.

2. I had heard that the weather was perfect, and now I knew it was true. The temperature was just what I needed. I was so happy to be here.

3. The view from the plane was amazing. I could see the clouds from above. It was like looking at a giant's foot. I was in awe.

4. I had heard that the food was good, and now I knew it was true. The chef was a professional. The food was delicious. I was so happy to be here.

5. I had heard that the service was excellent, and now I knew it was true. The staff was friendly and helpful. I was so happy to be here.

6. I had heard that the room was comfortable, and now I knew it was true. The bed was soft. The room was clean. I was so happy to be here.

7. I had heard that the location was perfect, and now I knew it was true. The view was beautiful. I was so happy to be here.

8. I had heard that the price was reasonable, and now I knew it was true. The service was excellent. I was so happy to be here.

9. I had heard that the food was good, and now I knew it was true. The chef was a professional. The food was delicious. I was so happy to be here.

10. I had heard that the service was excellent, and now I knew it was true. The staff was friendly and helpful. I was so happy to be here.

Yet, even so, the Poet is greater than those who do not understand his nature, who are not moved by the same generous sympathies, and who cannot or will not subject themselves to the same exquisite influences of that Power which struck him with darkness and extinction. The Poet, in his failure, is greater than those who have<sup>1</sup> never dared.

Instead of living in this state of seclusion, the business of the poet is, according to Shelley, "to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity..."<sup>2</sup> For this reason the poet should be permitted "to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality."<sup>3</sup> To ideals such as these, a poet should devote himself, Shelley says, and praises Wordsworth for this characteristic of his work:

Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine  
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:  
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood  
Above the blind and battling multitude:  
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave  
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—<sup>4</sup>

It is also the business of a poet, according to Shelley, to

...communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings in the vivid presence of which within his own mind consists at once his inspiration and his reward.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>There is a curious similarity here to Browning's doctrine of apparent failure.

<sup>2</sup>Notes to Hellas.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>To Wordsworth, ll. 7-12.

<sup>5</sup>Preface to The Revolt of Islam.





Not only this, but the poet, like others with special talents, is one who feels a sacred duty laid upon him, for:

Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.<sup>1</sup>

Being a poet is, then, according to Shelley, a very serious business: such a man is gifted above others, but the greater the gift that is his, the greater also the responsibility.

Wordsworth, like Shelley, has much to say concerning the nature of the poet, expressing himself thus in his Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads:

He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than any other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Preface to Prometheus Unbound.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth, pp. 793-794.



Wordsworth agrees with Shelley in his idea of the poet's being a man of keener sensibilities than others and of more comprehensive sympathies. In that part of his definition, however, which is more strictly Wordsworthian, he is farther from Shelley, that is, in his stressing those characteristics which are suggested to him by his own poetic practice. According to Wordsworth, poetry<sup>1</sup> "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity..."

To Shelley, the farther a poet gets from the invisible presence of that unseen influence that inspires him, the weaker his work will be, for "the mind in creation is as a fading coal."<sup>2</sup> In something else that Wordsworth has to say here, there is given an impression seemingly different from the spirit of Shelley's remarks on the same subject. It is doubtful if Shelley would have spoken of the poet as a man "pleased with his own passions and volitions..." Shelley's poet is one who has received the fire from heaven; there is no occasion for him to contemplate this fact with a satisfaction that savors slightly of smugness; it is his immediate thought and duty to go out and kindle others with the flame which illuminates his own mind.

In another passage Wordsworth lists what he calls the "powers requisite for the production of poetry"; first, observation and

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, p. 797 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

<sup>2</sup> Defence, p. 32.





description; second, sensibility; third, reflection; fourth, im-  
 agination and fancy; fifth, invention; "lastly," judgment.<sup>1</sup>

Wordsworth speaks of Coleridge and himself as "Prophets of  
 Nature," who "will speak a lasting inspiration," and who are "sanc-  
 tified by reason, blest by faith..."<sup>2</sup> He expresses his faith that

Poets, even as Prophets, each with each  
 Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,  
 Have each his own peculiar faculty,  
 Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to perceive  
 Objects unseen before,<sup>3</sup>

Shelley likewise looks upon the poet as a prophet, but not, he says,  
 "in the gross sense of the word," rather in that he "participates  
 in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his  
 conceptions, time and place and number are not."<sup>4</sup>

Wordsworth shows some similarity to Shelley when he takes in-  
 to cognizance the so-called "poetic temperament," saying:

The Poet, gentle creature as he is,  
 Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times;  
 His fits when he is neither sick nor well,  
 Though no distress be near him but his own  
 Unmanageable thoughts: his mind, best pleased  
 While she as duteous as the mother dove  
 Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,  
 But like the innocent bird, hath goadings on  
 That drive her as in trouble through the groves;  
 With me is now such passion, to be blamed  
 No otherwise than as it lasts too long.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, p. 801 (from Preface to the 1815 Edition of the  
Lyrical Ballads).

<sup>2</sup> The Prelude, Book XIV, ll. 444-446.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Book XIII, ll. 301-305.

<sup>4</sup> Defence, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> The Prelude, Book I, ll. 135-145.





In the same poem Wordsworth speaks of himself as possessing what he calls the "first great gift" of a poet, "the vital soul."

Coleridge has something to say about the quality of "sensitivity" in a poet—a quality which appears similar to the "sensitivity" mentioned by Shelley and Wordsworth:

Sensibility indeed, both quick and deep, is not only a characteristic feature, but may be deemed a component part, of genius. But it is not less an essential mark of true genius, that its sensibility is excited by any other cause more powerfully than by its own personal interests; for this plain reason, that the man of genius lives most in the ideal world, in which the present is still constituted by the future or the past; and because his feelings have been habitually associated with thoughts and images, to the number, clearness, and vivacity of which the sensation of self is always in an inverse proportion.<sup>1</sup>

With his usual critical acumen Coleridge expresses here a thought that is most significant, and one that is not at all related to what some people consider a weakness of the Romantic poets—that is, their too great preoccupation with self and its projection. It is a tribute to Coleridge's genius and independence as a critic—regardless of what one may think of the dictum he lays down here—that the idea should have occurred to him during an age of great subjectivity in poetry.

Another quotation gives an interesting idea of Coleridge's conception of the nature of genius: "All genius is metaphysical; because the ultimate end of genius is ideal, however it may be actualized by incidental and accidental circumstances."<sup>2</sup> Shelley

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, pp. 175-176.

<sup>2</sup> Coleridge, vol. VI, Table Talk, p. 411 (August 11, 1832).



would undoubtedly have expressed himself as being heartily in sympathy with the end of genius implied here; in fact, such a sympathy, it is possible to infer from what Shelley does say on the subject, especially in his Defence.

As to the specific qualities possessed by the true poet, Coleridge reveals his idea of these in his comments on Shakespeare, where he says:

...we must have admitted that Shakespeare possessed the chief, if not every, requisite of a poet,—deep feeling and exquisite sense of beauty, both as exhibited to the eye in the combinations of form, and to the ear in sweet and appropriate melody; that these feelings were under the command of his own will; that in his very first productions he projected his mind out of his own particular being, and felt, and made others feel, on subjects no way connected with himself, except by force of contemplation and that sublime faculty by which a great mind becomes that, on which it meditates. To this must be added that affectionate love of nature and natural objects, without which no man could have observed so steadily, or painted so truly and passionately, the very minutest beauties of the external world...

Moreover Shakespeare had shown that he possessed <sup>ed</sup>fancy, considered as the faculty of bringing together images dissimilar in the main by some one point of likeness...

And still mounting the intellectual ladder, he had as unequivocally proved the indwelling in his mind of imagination, or the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one... In its tranquil and purely pleasurable operation, it acts chiefly by creating out of many things, as they would have appeared in the description of an ordinary mind, detailed in unimpassioned succession, a oneness, even as nature, the greatest of poets, acts upon us, when we open our eyes upon an extended prospect...

Or again, it acts by so carrying on the eye of the reader as to make him almost lose the consciousness of words,—to make him see every thing flashed, as Wordsworth has grandly and appropriately said,—

Flashed upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;—  
and this without exciting any painful or laborious attention,

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

RESEARCH REPORT

REPORT NO. 100

BY

DR. J. H. DUNN

1955

The following is a summary of the results of the experiments conducted during the past year. The experiments were designed to determine the effect of temperature on the rate of reaction of the various components of the system. The results show that the rate of reaction increases with increasing temperature, and that the effect is more pronounced for the components which are more reactive. The experiments were conducted under conditions of constant pressure and constant volume, and the results were compared with those obtained from previous experiments. The results show that the rate of reaction is also affected by the concentration of the components, and that the effect is more pronounced for the components which are more reactive. The experiments were conducted under conditions of constant pressure and constant volume, and the results were compared with those obtained from previous experiments. The results show that the rate of reaction is also affected by the concentration of the components, and that the effect is more pronounced for the components which are more reactive.



without any anatomy of description (a fault not uncommon in descriptive poetry)—but with the sweetness and easy movement of nature. This energy is an absolute essential of poetry, and of itself would constitute a poet, though not one of the highest class;—it is, however, a most hopeful symptom, and the Venus and Adonis is one continued specimen of it.

.....  
 Finally, in this poem and the Rape of Lucrece, Shakespeare gave ample proof of his possession of a most profound, energetic, and philosophical mind, without which he might have pleased, but could not have been a great dramatic poet."<sup>1</sup>

This passage is chiefly interesting for the description given by Coleridge of the imagination and the way in which he believes that it operates. Both he and Shelley stress this faculty—Shelley's idea of the moral effect of poetry is built up entirely around the imagination and the peculiar way in which, according to him, the poetical representations act upon it. Shelley's concept of the imagination seems more closely connected with the ethical side of poetry, while Coleridge's has more to do with the aesthetic effect of this art.

As may be seen, fancy, to Coleridge, is a faculty inferior to the imagination; the mere operation of memory and the association of ideas, with which fancy has to do, are not enough for him. The imagination is the great unifying force (Coleridge is again applying his aesthetic principle il più nell' uno), possessing the power of reconciling opposites—this reconciliation is an idea emphasized a great deal throughout all of his criticism.

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Coleridge, vol. IV, Lectures upon Shakespeare and Other Dramatists, pp. 46-50.



Furthermore, the imagination, like nature, is creative, and it operates with the same sweet effortlessness. It is active in both the poet and his reader, and is a quality, indispensable, Coleridge says, in real poetry.

Mr. Saintsbury, in his summary of the contributions made by Coleridge to criticism, says: "He introduces once for all the criterion of Imagination, realising and disrealising."<sup>1</sup> That is, the power of this "esemplastic faculty," as Coleridge calls it, can lend a charm to the familiar, the real, this illustrated, to a great extent, by the poetry of Wordsworth--it was that part of the poetic territory, to use a rather crude figure, mapped out, in the discussions of the two poets prior to the publication of the Lyrical Ballads, as the particular realm in which Wordsworth would hold sway. But the imagination can also produce the illusion of reality, can lend a semblance of truth to supernatural persons and characters--and this was the province to be occupied by Coleridge in the same publication. He was intent on producing--and did produce-- for these "shadows of imagination that willing suspension<sup>2</sup> of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." The latter is a function of the imagination not dealt with by Shelley; it is the power of this faculty to give the charm of the unfamiliar to the familiar that he elaborates.

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<sup>1</sup> Saintsbury, vol. III, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, pp. 364-365, for his full discussion of this point.





Not only does Coleridge show us in the case of Shakespeare what he considers to be the qualities possessed by a true poet; he also lists directly what he calls "characteristics of poetic genius in general," saying:

1. The delight in richness and sweetness of sound, even to a faulty excess, if it be evidently original, and not the result of an easily imitable mechanism, I regard as a highly favorable promise in the compositions of a young man. The man that hath not music in his soul can indeed never be a genuine poet...the sense of musical delight, with the power of producing it, is a gift of imagination; and this together with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling, may be cultivated and improved, but can never be learned. It is in these that "poeta nascitur non fit."<sup>1</sup>

Again Coleridge makes use of his criterion, his cardinal aesthetic principle, stressing the power, inherent in a poet, of producing a oneness in thought and feeling. Shelley would probably have said that in everything poeta nascitur non fit.

2. A second promise of genius is the choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer himself.<sup>2</sup>

Coleridge's repetition of this idea in his criticism shows the importance that he attaches to it.<sup>3</sup>

3. It has been before observed that images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Coleridge's ideas as expressed here are similar to those of Goethe.



images awakened by that passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant; or lastly, when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit...

. . . . .

As of higher worth, so doubtless still more characteristic of poetic genius does the imagery become, when it moulds and colours itself to the circumstances, passion, or character, present and foremost in the mind.<sup>1</sup>

The poet, according to Coleridge, must possess something more than the ability to copy nature, to produce a mere mimesis: it is the addition of his own passion, his own imagination, the transferring to his images of his own mental life, that make his representations of value.

4. The last character I shall mention, which would prove indeed but little, except as taken conjointly with the former;—yet without which the former could scarce exist in a high degree, and (even if this were possible) would give promises only of transitory flashes and meteoric power;—is depth, and energy of thought. No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher.<sup>2</sup>

As has been shown in the discussion of the Defence, the distinction between a poet and a philosopher was not one with which Shelley was concerned, this attitude being the result of his extended definition of poetry. Yet he would probably have reversed the statement above, and said that no man could become a profound philosopher, at least not a philosopher who would express truths most beneficial to mankind, unless there was in him something of the poetical faculty.

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, pp. 378-379.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 380-381.





One more thing of interest concerning what Coleridge has to say of the poet, and that is in regard to the "poetic temperament," an idea suggested by Wordsworth as an explanation of what might appear to be vagaries in the poet's thinking or actions. Coleridge says:

Yet even in instances of this kind, a close examination will often detect, that the irritability, which has been attributed to the author's genius as its cause, did really originate in an ill conformation of body, obtuse pain, or constitutional defect of pleasurable sensation. What is charged to the author, belongs to the man, who would probably have been still more impatient, but for the humanizing influences of the very pursuit, which yet bears the blame of his irritability.<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge is closer to Shelley here, especially in the last sentence, than Wordsworth appears in his remarks on the same subject.<sup>2</sup>

Byron has much less to say about the characteristics of a poet than appears in Shelley. He is like the latter, however, in his view that the poet and the every-day individual (although in the same person) are entirely separate, and that one phase of the poet's personality should not be confused with the other (see Thesis pp. 227-228). In answering criticisms which were directed against Cain, Byron says:

My ideas of a character may run away with me: like all imaginative men, I, of course, embody myself with the character while I draw it, but not a moment after the pen is from off the paper.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>  
This view of Coleridge's may have grown out of his own experience.

<sup>3</sup>  
Byron, Prose, vol. VI, p. 32 (from a letter to Thomas Moore, March 4, 1822).





The presence of strong feeling is, however, a quality stressed by Byron in the poet.

I verily believe that nor you, nor any man of poetical temperament, can avoid a strong passion of some kind. It is the poetry of life. What should I have known or written, had I been a quiet, mercantile politician, or a lord in waiting? A man must travel, and turmoil, or there is no existence.<sup>1</sup>

Byron does not, like Shelley, conceive of the poets—at least, some of them—as being possessed of the happiest and best minds, an attitude he reveals in the following quotation:

The paper on the Methodists I redde, and agree with the writer on one point, in which you and he perhaps differ; that an addiction to poetry is very generally the result of 'an uneasy mind in an uneasy body;' disease or deformity have been the attendants of many of our best. Collins mad—Chatterton, I think, mad—Cowper mad—Pope Crooked—Milton blind—Gray (I have heard that the last was afflicted by an incurable and very grievous distemper, though not generally known) and others—I have somewhere read, however, that poets rarely go mad. I suppose the writer means that their insanity effervesces and evaporates in verse—may be so.<sup>2</sup>

Byron has very little to say about inspiration, imagination, or fancy as part of the poetic constitution. He does speak in one place of:

the unquiet feelings, which first woke  
Song in the world,<sup>3</sup>

Also, concerning one reason why the poet writes, Byron says:

'Tis to create, and in creating live  
A being more intense that we endow  
With form our fancy, gaining as we give

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., vol. V, p. 70 (from a letter to Thomas Moore, August 31, 1820).

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., vol. III, pp. 247-248 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, early in November, 1815).

<sup>3</sup>  
Don Juan, Canto IV: CVI, ll. 3-4.



The life we image, even as I do now—  
 What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,  
 Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,  
 Invisible but gazing, as I glow  
 Mixed with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,  
 And feeling still with thee in my crushed feelings' dearth.<sup>1</sup>

Here the poet is represented as attempting to find reality in the creatures of his imagination. There is something in these lines of Byron's that suggests Shelley's idea of the poets' belonging to a chameleonic race. Byron also writes:

The mind can make  
 Substance, and people planets of its own  
 With beings brighter than have been, and give  
 A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.<sup>2</sup>

The poet finds in his imagination a more intense living than in life itself.

The whole subject of what a poet is or should be, however, Byron appears to dismiss with these words: "As to defining what a poet should be, it is not worth while, for what are they worth?  
 3  
 what have they done?"

Keats has more to say than Byron concerning the nature of a poet, expressing, as Shelley does, opinions of the qualities which such a man should possess. His conception, too, of the poet's characteristics is an idealized one; for instance, he remarks: "I am convinced more and more every day that (excepting the human

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<sup>1</sup> Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto III: VI.

<sup>2</sup> The Dream, ll. 19-22.

<sup>3</sup> Byron, Prose, vol. V, p. 196 (from Extracts from a Diary, January 31, 1821).



friend philosopher), a fine writer is the most genuine being in  
the world.<sup>1</sup>

There is one quality which Keats believes is always found in the "Man of Achievement" in literature; concerning this he says:

I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated versimilitude caught from the Penetrallium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge. This pursued through volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.<sup>2</sup>

This idea of a poet's connection with Beauty is stressed by Keats more than anything else, to such an extent that it might almost be called his fundamental principle of criticism, his criterion of judgment. Even though he shows, in many of his later letters, a disposition to modify the content of his verse (his early work) and deal with subjects that have a closer connection with humanity and its troubles, he never abandons his allegiance to the spirit of Beauty, which, to him, represents Truth also. If one should add to these the Good, Shelley's position would be reached.

Another of Keats's views on this matter of a poet's nature is very similar to a thought expressed by Shelley: namely, that poets are chameleon-like in their qualities. Keats says:

In passing, however, I must say one thing that has pressed upon me lately, and increased my Humility and capability of

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<sup>1</sup> Keats, p. 388 (from a letter to Benjamin Bailey, August 15, 1819).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 277 (from a letter to George and Thomas Keats, December 22, 1817).





submission--and that is this truth--Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal Chemicals operating on this Mass of neutral intellect--but they have not any individuality... I would call the top and head of those who have a proper self Men of Power.<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, the poets whom Shelley would call "Men of Power."

Other comments are made by Keats on the particular phase of the poet's temperament described above:

As to the poetical Character itself (I mean that sort, of which, if I am anything, I am a member; that sort distinguished from the Wordsworthian, or egotistical Sublime; which is a thing per se, and stands alone,) it is not itself--it has no self--It is everything and nothing--It has no character--it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated--It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things, any more than from its taste for the bright one, because they both end in speculation. A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no Identity--he is continually in for and filling some other body. The Sun,--the Moon,--the Sea, and men and women, who are creatures of impulse, are poetical, and have about them an unchangeable attribute; the poet has none, no identity--he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's creatures.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to notice that Keats employs the same word in his description of the poet that Shelley uses, both comparing him in his nature to a chameleon. The resemblance ends there, however, for the rest of what Keats has to say concerning the poet is not in accordance with the views Shelley expresses on the subject.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 274 (from a letter to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 336-339 (from a letter to Richard Woodhouse, October 27, 1818).





Something more than "impulse" would be necessary, in Shelley's opinion, to distinguish from others those who possessed the poetical faculty.

Concerning other qualities of the poet, his innate dignity and his understanding of all things in nature--the latter concept being similar to Shelley's--Keats writes:

Where's the Poet? Show him! show him,  
Muses nine! that I may know him!  
'Tis the man who with a man  
Is an equal, be he King,  
Or poorest of the beggar-clan,  
Or any other wondrous thing  
A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato;  
'Tis the man who with a bird,  
Wren, or Eagle, finds his way to  
All its instincts; he hath heard  
The Lion's roaring, and can tell  
What his horny throat expresseth,  
And to him the Tiger's yell  
Comes articulate and presseth  
On his ear like mother-tongue.<sup>1</sup>

Nor does Keats neglect the other side of the picture, for he makes this admission: "I feel in myself all the vices of a Poet, irritability, love of effect and admiration..."<sup>2</sup> Yet he realizes that great creations are the result of labor and effort on the poet's part--his realization of this is keener than Shelley's. "Nothing is finer for the purposes of great productions than a very gradual

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<sup>1</sup>

Fragments, I, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup>

Keats, p. 349 (from a letter to Benjamin Robert Haydon, December 22, 1818).



ripening of the intellectual powers."<sup>1</sup> In another passage he says: "The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself..."<sup>2</sup>

When a man, understanding the nature of poetry and possessed of those qualities which enable him to produce it, feels impelled to create (as Shelley would say), what form may or does his work take? The Romantics under consideration will be consulted for an answer to this question.

As to ~~the~~ matter of form in general Shelley makes a statement, which he repeats several times in his Prefaces and which, therefore, may be considered an underlying principle of his writing: namely, "I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style."<sup>3</sup> Then he qualifies this statement by adding:

But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live; though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded...In this view of things Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakespeare than Shakespeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any era can escape; and which I have

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 282 (from a letter to George and Thomas Keats, January 23, 1818).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 328-329 (from a letter to James Augustus Hessey, October 9, 1818).

<sup>3</sup> Preface to The Revolt of Islam.





not attempted to escape.<sup>1</sup>

The central idea found here, Shelley expresses two years later in his Preface to Prometheus Unbound, where he speaks of the poets as "in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations of their age." Thus the form of a poet's work would, in the opinion of Shelley, be influenced somewhat by the age in which he lived.

Shelley has something to say also concerning his preference for specific forms of poetry. Explaining his choice of verse pattern for The Revolt of Islam, he writes:

I have adopted the stanza of Spenser (a measure inexpressibly beautiful), not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity; you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed also by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure.<sup>2</sup>

It is the drama, however, in which Shelley appears to take the deepest interest, if one may judge by the extent to which he discusses this form and also by the fact that he attempted this type on several occasions, notably in The Cenci and Prometheus Unbound. Curiously enough, that form which seems most closely associated with Shelley and in which he attained, for many, poetic heights—the lyric—he says the least about. In the Defence, where there

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid.





is an extended discussion of the drama, Shelley explains his pre-occupation with this form by saying that in the drama there may be combined the greatest number of modes of expression of poetry, also that in this type the connection between poetry and social good is most observable--the drama, in other words, acts more as a barometer of the state of society in which it is produced than do other forms of poetry.

Another advantage of this form, according to Shelley, is that not only may the drama present "beautiful idealisms of moral excellence," as Shelley wrote of his own work in the Preface to Prometheus Unbound, but the tragedy, being capable of producing healing and purgative effects through the particular emotions that it arouses, may deal with representations other than the ideal--provided that these representations are treated poetically. This point of view, Shelley elaborates in the following passage, some of which has already been quoted:

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is



no fit place for the enforcement of them.

The drama, in its highest form, is thus, according to Shelley, that type which can well illustrate, when properly and poetically handled, the best method of inculcating morals.

Discussing his treatment of Prometheus, in which Shelley followed the practice of the Greek dramatic writers, he explains, in the following passage, his idea of their method of procedure:

The Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian sotry was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.<sup>2</sup>

Writing of Hellas, which Shelley calls "A Lyrical Drama," he defends this title:

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.<sup>3</sup>

What Wordsworth has to say about the matter of form in poetry is so closely connected with his discussion of specific theories of diction that it, together with Coleridge's remarks on the

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<sup>1</sup> Preface to The Cenci.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to Prometheus Unbound.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to Hellas.



same subject, will be postponed to a later section. The <sup>t</sup>attitude of both of these men, however, toward the ballad and its revival is well known, the choice of Lyrical Ballads as a title for their volume of poems being most significant. In his Essay, Supplementary to the Preface (of 1815) Wordsworth says a great deal about the Reliques of Percy and the Ossianic poems of Macpherson, attributing much influence to the former.<sup>1</sup> In connection with the matter of poetry's appearing in new forms, one remark made by Wordsworth might be quoted for the reason that it expresses an attitude similar to Shelley's concerning the relationship of a writer to his age: "every author, as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be."<sup>2</sup> Thus, both Shelley and Wordsworth, different from Matthew Arnold, feel that it is the poet, rather than the critic, who leads the way.

Byron has a little to say concerning the form of poetry, especially those forms that do not appeal to him. His publisher, John Murray, has been urging him to undertake an epic poem, a task which Byron refuses, giving as one of his reasons that it would be a work of seven or eight years' duration and stating that "If one's years can't be better employed than in sweating poesy, a man had better be a ditcher."<sup>3</sup> He shows a sympathy here with the position taken

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, pp. 812-813.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 814.

<sup>3</sup> Byron, Letters and Journals, vol. IV, p. 284 (from a letter to John Murray, April 6, 1819).







by Shelley on the matter of toil and study connected with the production of verse, both of the positions being similar to that of Keats, who declares that poetry must come "as naturally as the leaves to a tree." Byron is also unfavorably disposed toward the sonnet, though for different reasons. He writes:

Redde some Italian, and wrote two sonnets on \* \* \*. I never wrote but one sonnet before, and that was not in earnest, and many years ago, as an exercise--and I will never write another. They are the most puling, petrifying, stupidly platonic compositions. I detest the Petrarch so much, that I would not be the man even to have obtained his Laura, which the metaphysical, whining dotard never could.<sup>1</sup>

Although Shelley, like Byron, wrote few sonnets, the opinion of Byron concerning one of the old masters of this form is assuredly not in accordance with Shelley's admiration for this writer. Furthermore, Shelley bases his admiration for this man on Petrarch's love poetry, which Byron so unrestrainedly condemns here. It is quite possible that the same qualities in these compositions which made Byron call them "stupidly platonic" awakened Shelley's admiration.

Like other phases of his criticism, what Byron says about the form of poetry is colored by his admiration for Pope. The following passage shows his reaction to the stanza form used by the Reverend Francis Hodgson in his The Friends: A Poem:

As to the poetry of this New-fangled Stanza, I wish they would write the octave or the Spenser; we have no other legitimate

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., vol. II, p. 379 (from Byron's Journal, December 17, 1818).



measure of that kind. He is right in defending Pope against the bastard Pelicans of the poetical winter day, who add insult to their Parricide by sucking the blood of the parent of English real poetry--poetry without fault,--and then spurning the bosoms which fed them.<sup>1</sup>

There is not much to be found in Keats's work concerning the form which he believes poetry should take; in his practice, he, like Shelley, seems intuitively to adopt that pattern which is most appropriate to the expression of his ideas--both of them appeared to write under the irresistible influence of a spirit impelling them toward poetry. Furthermore, like Shelley, he says the least about that form in which he attains the greatest supremacy--the ode. One statement of Keats's concerning his own poetic practice may be of interest:

The following poem--the last I have written--is the first and only one with which I have taken even moderate pains. I have, for the most part, dashed off my lines in a hurry. This I have done leisurely--I think it reads the more richly for it, and will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to examine this in connection with what Shelley and Byron say on the matter of labor and taking pains in poetry, although, as has been stated before, Shelley's actual practice is not always in accord with the theories he expresses on this point.

There is one form of poetry, however, in which Keats, like Shelley, takes a deep interest, and it is this form to which he aspires. He says concerning this: "One of my Ambitions is to make

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., vol. IV, p. 304 (from a letter to John Murray, May 18, 1819).

<sup>2</sup> Keats, p. 142 (from a letter to his Brother and Sister, April 30, 1819).





as great a revolution in modern dramatic writing as Kean has<sup>1</sup> done in acting." This ambition he expresses more fully in the following passage:

I have come to a determination not to publish anything I have now ready written: but, for all that, to publish a poem before long, and that I hope to make a fine one. As the marvelous is the most enticing, and the surest guarantee of harmonious numbers, I have been endeavouring to persuade myself to untether Fancy, and to let her manage for herself. I and myself cannot agree about this at all. Wonders are no wonders to me. I am more at home amongst men and women. I would rather read Chaucer than Ariosto. The little dramatic skill I may as yet have, however badly it might show in a drama, would, I think, be sufficient for a poem. I wish to diffuse the colouring of St. Agnes's Eve throughout a poem in which character and sentiment would be the figures to such drapery. Two or three such poems, if God should spare me, written in the course of the next six years, would be a famous Gradus ad Parnassum altissimum—I mean they would nerve me up to the writing of a few fine plays—my greatest ambition, when I do feel ambitious.<sup>2</sup>

Six years would seem but a little time to ask for the completion of such an ambitious design as Keats expresses here, yet fifteen months from the time this letter was written, and he had become

a portion of the loveliness  
Which once he made more lovely:

A little over a year, and the creator of Adonais, too, laid down his work unfinished.

In the consideration of the matter of poetic diction the ideas of Wordsworth will be discussed first, since his work takes chrono-

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<sup>1</sup>

Keats, p. 388 (from a letter to Benjamin Bailey, August 15, 1819).

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., p. 415 (from a letter to John Taylor, November 17, 1819).





logical precedence over that of Shelley, and since Shelley's opinions, in several instances, show his reaction to what Wordsworth has said on this point.

His familiar theory of poetic diction, Wordsworth expresses rather completely in the following passage, after he has announced his decision to choose characters, in general, from humble and rustic life:

The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust), because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites of their own creation.<sup>1</sup>

Simplicity, then, lack of artificiality—these are the qualities stressed by Wordsworth here. Attempting to give a logical justification for his position, Wordsworth continues:

The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly... But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless, therefore, we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this sup-

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Wordsworth, p. 791 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).



posed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Wordsworth has reached this decision because of the kind of poetry produced before he wrote and still popular in his day; it seems to be his desire to make a definite break with all this type of thing. He informs the reader that he intends to avoid personifications (characteristic of the poetry of his time), which, he says, "are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style and raise it above prose."<sup>2</sup> He says, further:

There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men... I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.<sup>3</sup>

What Wordsworth says, in the second and third lines of this quotation, about the pains taken to avoid the type of language of which he disapproves is interesting—both methods of procedure, the taking pains to avoid, and the taking pains to produce, a certain type of diction, might suggest a degree of artificiality, something that appears contrary to the spirit of his own purpose, and something, also, that is not entirely in accord with Shelley's theory concerning the work of a poet (who, according to Shelley,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 796.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 792.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.





produces more as a result of inspiration than of taking pains), or with Keats's dictum that poetry must come "as naturally as the leaves to a tree."

The formation of any system of words for use in poetry, as well as the binding oneself to adhere to such a system, is a thought distasteful to Shelley, for whom real poetry means something entirely different. His position on this matter is made clear in the following passage:

I do no presume to enter into competition with our greatest contemporary Poets. Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character; designing that, even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words to divert the attention of the reader, from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving to disgust them according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, according to Shelley, a person endowed with those qualities which are the characteristic possessions of a poet, one familiar, too, with the world of nature and the world of the happiest and best minds, has no need of any system of diction to regulate his choice of words--such a person can safely trust his own intuitive judgment. Although Shelley does not express this idea in specific

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Preface to The Revolt of Islam.





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terms here, as other critics have expressed it,<sup>1</sup> there seems to be a feeling in him that it would be difficult to disassociate the body from the spirit of poetry.

In another passage also Shelley appears to be referring directly to the critical theories of Wordsworth concerning the selection of language really used by men. Shelley says:

In other respects, I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men, and that our great ancestors the ancient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong.<sup>2</sup>

Or, Shelley might have added, as Coleridge said, any class which, for insufficient reasons might have been selected as that whose "real" language appeared (mistakenly) to show a universality of speech.

It is true that Shelley says of his own practice in The Cenci:

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature.<sup>3</sup>

This passage is entirely in accord with ideas expressed by Wordsworth, who says:

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, among the Romantic critics, Coleridge and Goethe.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to The Cenci.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

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5408 S. UNIVERSITY AVE. CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

TEL: 773-936-5000 FAX: 773-936-5001

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It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavor to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.<sup>1</sup>

In a passage previously quoted Shelley has expressed a fear that any system of "mere words" may divert the attention of his reader from more important things, a possibility of association of ideas which evidently does not occur to Wordsworth in the passage quoted above.

Giving his reasons for the avoiding of what he calls "mere poetry," Shelley continues:

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remoted and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness.<sup>2</sup>

Here the simile of the Spirit and the flesh is used most strikingly--this seems to be Shelley's conception of the relation between thought and style. Because of this conviction he cannot accept Wordsworth's specific system of poetic diction, although in harmony with him in the idea of avoiding mere accidental ornaments.

Coleridge, too, believes that the connection between thoughts

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, p. 795 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

<sup>2</sup> Preface to The Cenci.



and their expression is one that cannot be lightly disturbed, saying:

I was wont boldly to affirm, that it would be scarcely more difficult to push a stone out from the Pyramids with the bare hand, than to alter a word, or the position of a word, in Milton or Shakespeare (in their most important works at least), without making the poet say something else, or something worse, than he does say.<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge also criticizes those poets whose work fails to show a perfect harmony between thoughts and their expression:

...I appeared to myself to see plainly between even the characteristic faults of our elder poets, and the false beauty of the moderns. In the former, from Donne to Cowley, we find the most fantastic, out-of-the-way thoughts, but in the most pure and genuine mother English; in the latter, the most obvious thoughts, in language the most fantastic and arbitrary. Our faulty elder poets sacrificed the passion and passionate flow of poetry to the subtleties of intellect and to the starts of wit; the moderns, to the glare and glitter of a perpetual, yet borken and heterogeneous imagery, or rather to an amphibious something, made up, half of image, and half of abstract meaning. The one sacrificed the heart to the head; the other both heart and head to paint and drapery.<sup>2</sup>

He criticizes Pope, too, for the same lack of harmony:

Meantime, the matter and diction seemed to me characterized not so much by poetic thoughts, as by thoughts translated into the language of poetry.<sup>3</sup>

In another passage he shows the futility of attempting to translate any part of poetic diction into words other than those in which the poetic thought first took on flesh:

As the result of all my reading and meditation, I abstracted two critical aphorisms, deeming them to comprise the conditions

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, pp. 158-159.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 155.







and criteria of poetic style;—first, that not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return, with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power, and claims the name of essential poetry;—secondly, that whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction.<sup>1</sup>

Both of the ideas expressed in this passage show a kinship between Coleridge and Shelley, the thought that time is necessary for the proper evaluation of poetry, and the concept of the necessary fundamental harmony, in real poetry, between words and their sense.

In another passage Coleridge expresses the same desire for simplicity in poetic diction that Shelley and Wordsworth express. He lists what he calls the "three sins" of a young writer in poetry: "doleful egotism...the recurrence of favourite phrases, with the double defect of being at once trite and licentious...low creeping language and thoughts, under the pretence of simplicity... the in-<sup>2</sup> discriminate use of elaborate and swelling language and imagery." This passage also shows a characteristic of Coleridge's criticism which distinguishes him from Shelley. Coleridge has much more to say than the other about poetry from the craftsman's point of view; Shelley, for the most part, looks at poetry ideally, from the aesthetic and ethical points of view—the last two being combined in

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 161-162.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people.

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his notion of the particular way in which poetry operates to produce a beneficial effect on the reader.

Both of them are unwilling to accept Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction; Shelley, however, expresses his objections to it indirectly and incompletely as compared to Coleridge, who attacks the principle advocated by Wordsworth with a directness and fullness and logical completeness of argument that are effective in undermining it. He objects to the theory, first of all, because he feels that it can be applied to certain classes of poetry only. Also, if this principle is applicable, it is "applicable...in such a sense, as hath never by any one...been denied or doubted..."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, even though the principle be practicable, "it is yet as a rule useless, if not injurious, and therefore either need not, or ought to be practised."<sup>2</sup> He calls attention to Wordsworth's own application of this theory, saying that even in The Brothers, Michael, Ruth, The Mad Mother, and other similar poems, the language of the characters may be "attributable to causes and circumstances not necessarily connected with 'their occupation and abode.'"<sup>3</sup>

Then turning to his own position in this matter of poetic diction, he explains it clearly, saying:

I should not have entered so much into detail upon this passage, but here seems to be the point, to which all the lines of difference converge as to their source and centre;--I mean, as far as, and in whatever respect, my poetic creed does differ from the doctrines promulgated in this preface. I adopt

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 397.



with full faith, the principle of Aristotle, that poetry, as poetry, is essentially ideal, that it avoids and excludes all accident; that its apparent individualities of rank, character, or occupation must be representative of a class; and that the persons of poetry must be clothed with generic attributes, with the common attributes of the class; not with such as one gifted individual might possibly possess, but such as from his situation it is most probable beforehand that he would possess. If my premises are right and my deductions legitimate, it follows that there can be no poetic medium between the swains of Theocritus and those of an imaginary golden age.<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge believes, moreover, that when the language of the rustic has been purified, as Wordsworth suggests, it will then "not differ from the language of any other man of common sense, however learned or refined he may be, except as far as the notions, which the rustic has to convey, are fewer and more indiscriminate."<sup>2</sup>

Also:

the poet, who uses an illogical diction, or a style fitted to excite only the low and changeable pleasure of wonder by means of groundless novelty, substitutes a language of folly and vanity, not for that of the rustic, but for that of good sense and natural feeling.<sup>3</sup>

Still further contravening the position of Wordsworth, as shown in the expressed preference of the latter for the "real language of men," Coleridge says:

I object, in the very first instance, to an equivocation in the use of the word 'real.' Every man's language varies, according to the extent of his knowledge, the activity of his faculties, and the depth or quickness of his feelings... For 'real' therefore, we must substitute ordinary, or lingua communis. And this, we have proved, is no more to be found in the phraseology of low and rustic life than in that of any other class. Omit the peculiarities of each and the result of course must be common to all.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 399-400.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 404.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 407-408.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 408-409.







Then, to conclude his discussion of the matter, he remarks:

To sum up the whole in one sentence. When a poem, or a part of a poem, shall be adduced, which is evidently vicious in the figures and contexture of its style, yet for the condemnation of which no reason can be assigned, except that it differs from the style in which men actually converse, then, and not till then, can I hold this theory to be either plausible, or practicable, or capable of furnishing either rule, guidance, or precaution, that might not, more easily and more safely, as well as more naturally, have been deduced in the author's own mind from considerations of grammar, logic, and the truth and nature of things, confirmed by the authority of works, whose fame is not of one country, nor of one age.<sup>1</sup>

It has been difficult for critics, since the time of Coleridge, to add much to his discussion of Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction, at least as far as pointing out its weaknesses is concerned.<sup>2</sup>

Turning again to the positive side of the question, Coleridge explains his own idea of poetic style:

But if it be asked, by what principles the poet is to regulate his own style, if he do not adhere closely to the sort and order of words which he hears in the market, wake, high-road, or plough-field? I reply; by principles, the ignorance or neglect of which would convict him of being no poet, but a silly or presumptuous usurper of the name. By the principles of grammar, logic, psychology. In one word by such<sup>a</sup> knowledge of the facts, material and spiritual, that most appertain to his art, as, if it have been governed and applied by good sense, and rendered instinctive by habit, becomes the representative and reward of our past conscious reasonings, insights, and conclusions, and acquires the name of Taste... Through the same process and by the same creative agency will the poet distinguish the degree and kind of the excitement produced by the very act of poetic composition. As intuitively will he know,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 433.

<sup>2</sup>In a modern discussion of this matter (Critical Theories and Poetic Practice in the "Lyrical Ballads"), Mr. Srikumar Banerjee expresses his belief that Coleridge was unjust in his criticism of Wordsworth, primarily because Coleridge was unable to comprehend the inner spirit of Wordsworth's ideas. Mr. Banerjee concludes, however, that in Wordsworth's best poems he traveled far beyond the limits of his theory.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CHAPTER I  
THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA  
The first discovery of America was made by Christopher Columbus in 1492. He was an Italian explorer who sailed for Spain. He discovered the New World, which was then called America. He was the first European to reach the Americas by sea. His voyage was the first of many that would follow, leading to the colonization of the continent.

CHAPTER II  
THE EARLY YEARS  
The early years of the United States were marked by the struggle for independence from Great Britain. The American Revolution began in 1775 and ended in 1783. The United States Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776. The new nation was born, and the struggle for freedom and self-determination began.

CHAPTER III  
THE GROWTH OF THE NATION  
The growth of the nation was marked by the westward expansion of the United States. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 doubled the size of the country. The Texas Revolution of 1835-1836 led to the annexation of Texas in 1845. The Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 resulted in the acquisition of California and other territories. The United States continued to grow and expand its territory.

CHAPTER IV  
THE CIVIL WAR  
The Civil War was fought between 1861 and 1865. It was a conflict between the Northern States and the Southern States. The war was fought over the issue of slavery. The Union emerged victorious, and slavery was abolished. The Civil War was a turning point in the history of the United States.

what differences of style it at once inspires and justifies; what intermixture of conscious volition is natural to that state; and in what instances such figures and colours of speech degenerate into mere creatures of an arbitrary purpose, cold technical artifices of ornament or connection. For, even as truth is its own light and evidence, discovering at once itself and falsehood, so is it the prerogative of poetic genius to distinguish by parental instinct its proper offspring from the changelings, which the gnomes of vanity or the fairies of fashion may have laid in its cradle or called by its names... The rules of the Imagination are themselves the very powers of growth and production. The words to which they are reducible, present only the outlines and external appearance of the fruit. A deceptive counterfeit of the superficial form and colours may be elaborated; but the marble peach feels cold and heavy, and children only put it to their mouths.<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge's idea of taste is not far from that expressed by Shelley in the Defence, where the latter calls it the sense of an approximation to a peculiar order and rhythm characteristic of a particular class of mimetic representation, this sense of an approximation to the beautiful being possessed in the highest degree by the poets.<sup>2</sup> Coleridge, however, is much more definite and specific in his explanation of the matter and in his application of it to poetry. Both he and Shelley feel that the imaginative insight of genius is a much better guide in poetic style than any mere system of words.

Byron has little to say concerning poetic diction; he does object, as has been shown (see Thesis, p. 220), to the poetry of some of the "Lakers" because it lacks the quality of "gentlemanliness," and is "vulgar." Shelley writes of vulgarity in a rather different manner:

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<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, pp. 428-429.

<sup>2</sup>

Defence, pp. 3-4.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a proper understanding of the present. The author then proceeds to discuss the various factors which have influenced the development of the United States, including the role of the government, the influence of the economy, and the impact of the culture. The author concludes by stating that the study of the history of the United States is a task of great importance, and that it is one which should be undertaken by all who are interested in the future of the country.

The second part of the paper discusses the role of the government in the development of the United States. It is argued that the government has played a crucial role in the shaping of the country, and that its actions have had a profound impact on the lives of the people. The author then proceeds to discuss the various policies which the government has implemented, including the establishment of the federal government, the creation of the states, and the development of the economy. The author concludes by stating that the government is a powerful force in the United States, and that its actions should be carefully monitored and controlled.

The third part of the paper discusses the influence of the economy on the development of the United States. It is argued that the economy has played a crucial role in the shaping of the country, and that its actions have had a profound impact on the lives of the people. The author then proceeds to discuss the various factors which have influenced the development of the economy, including the role of the government, the influence of the culture, and the impact of the technology. The author concludes by stating that the economy is a powerful force in the United States, and that its actions should be carefully monitored and controlled.



I use the word vulgar in its most extensive sense; the vulgarity of rank and fashion is as gross in its way, as that of poverty, and its cant terms equally expressive of base conceptions, and therefore equally unfit for poetry. Not that the familiar style is to be admitted in the treatment of a subject wholly ideal, or in that part of any subject which relates to common life, where the passion, exceeding a certain limit, touches the boundaries of that which is ideal. Strong passion expresses itself in metaphor, borrowed from all objects alike remote or near, and casts over all the shadow of its own greatness.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from its relation to what Byron has said, this passage, like others of Shelley's, shows a point of view different from Wordsworth's on the subject of poetic diction.

This matter is of much more interest to Keats than to Byron; he expresses several opinions concerning it, but the key to all he thinks about poetic diction is found in one short sentence: "I look upon fine phrases like a lover."<sup>2</sup> He is keenly observant of the diction in poetry that he reads, criticizing Wordsworth on this score:

Wordsworth sometimes, though in a fine way, gives us sentences in the style of school exercises.--For instance,  
The lake doth glitter,  
Small bird twitter.<sup>3</sup>

Although Keats has tried to take any sting out of this remark, what he says is not complimentary to the diction used by the older poet in some of his work.

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley, Prose Works, vol. I, p. 383 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, August 15, 1819).

<sup>2</sup> Keats, p. 388 (from a letter to Benjamin Bailey, August 15, 1819).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 269 (from a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, September, 1817).





Keats also shows himself critical of languages in general--a matter in which Shelley does not appear to take the same interest--saying of the French:

While I was speaking about France it occurred to me to speak a few Words on their Language--it is perhaps the poorest one ever spoken since the jabbering in the Tower of Babel, and when you come to know that the real use and greatness of a Tongue is to be referred to its Literature--you will be astonished to find how very inferior it is to our native Speech--I wish the Italian would supersede French in every school throughout the Country, for that is full of real Poetry and Romance of a kind more fitted for the Pleasure of Ladies than perhaps our own.<sup>1</sup>

Yet for use in his own poetry Keats prefers his native language, saying: "I shall never become attached to a foreign idiom, so as to put it into my writings."<sup>2</sup>

He is like Wordsworth in his admiration for Chatterton, saying of the latter's diction:

He is the purest writer in the English Language. He has no French idiom or particles, like Chaucer--'tis genuine English Idiom in English words. I have given up Hyperion--there were too many Miltonic inversions in it--Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or, rather, artist's humour.<sup>3</sup>

Turning now to the attitude of these Romantics toward the question of metre, one finds that the three who have expressed definite opinions on the subject--Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge--agree in the idea that metre is not essential to poetry. Shelley

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<sup>1</sup>  
Keats, p. 265 (from a letter to Fanny Keats, September 10, 1817).

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., p. 404 (from a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, September 22, 1819).

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid., p. 408 (from a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, September 22, 1819).



says in the Defence: "Yet it is by no means essential that a poet should accommodate<sup>m</sup> his language to this traditional form, so that the harmony, which is its spirit, be observed."<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth remarks: "Metre is but adventitious to composition..."<sup>2</sup> Coleridge<sup>3</sup> also says that mere metre is "not itself essentially poetic..."

All of these men, however, qualify their statements concerning the presence of metre in poetry. Shelley adds to what has already been quoted in this connection:

The practice is indeed convenient and popular, and to be preferred, especially in such composition as includes much action: but every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the example of his predecessors in the exact structure of his peculiar versification.<sup>4</sup>

Wordsworth, too, gives his idea of the advantage to be gained by using metre in poetical compositions:

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure; but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary

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<sup>1</sup>

P. 7.

<sup>2</sup>

Wordsworth, p. 800, Appendix (1802).

<sup>3</sup>

Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, p. 421.

<sup>4</sup>

Defence, p. 7.





feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion.<sup>1</sup>

Thus metre, according to Wordsworth, tempers strong passion so that it can be borne by a mind unaccustomed to such excitement.

Coleridge, in an interesting passage, not only speaks of an advantage in the use of metre, but has more to say also about this state of excitement which, Wordsworth believes, poetry produces in the mind of the reader, the former's remarks carrying Wordsworth's thoughts to their logical conclusion.

Metre, therefore, having been connected with poetry most often and by a peculiar fitness, whatever else is combined with metre, must, though it be not itself essentially poetic, have nevertheless some property in common with poetry, as an inter-medium of affinity, a sort (if I may dare borrow a well-known phrase from technical chemistry) of mordant between it and the super-added metre. Now, poetry, Mr. Wordsworth truly affirms, does always imply passion; which word must be here understood in its most general sense, as an excited state of the feelings and faculties. And as every passion has its proper pulse, so will it likewise have its characteristic modes of expression. But where there exists that degree of genius and talent which entitles a writer to aim at the honours of a poet, the very act of poetic composition itself is, and is allowed to imply and to produce, an unusual state of excitement, which of course justifies and demands a correspondent difference of language, as truly, though not perhaps in as marked degree, as the excitement of love, fear, rage, or jealousy... The wheels take fire from the mere rapidity of their motion.<sup>2</sup>

He gives another reason also for the use of metre:

Metre in itself is simply a stimulant of the attention, and therefore excites the question: Why is the attention to

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1

Wordsworth, p. 796 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).

2

Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, p. 421.

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be thus stimulated? Now the question can not be answered by the pleasure of the metre itself: for this we have shown to be conditional, and dependent on the appropriateness of the thoughts and expressions, to which the metrical form is super-added. Neither can I conceive any other answer that can be rationally given, short of this: I write in metre, because I am about to use a language different from that of prose.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to saying that metre is peculiarly appropriate in poetry and also serves as a stimulant to the attention, Coleridge expresses admiration for the skillful use of poetical measures. Shakespeare, it has been shown, he admires greatly, one reason being "the sweetness of his versification." His remarks about Spenser show the attention paid by him to this quality of poetic style:

Spenser's Epithalamion is truly sublime; and pray mark the swan-like movement of his exquisite Prothalamion. His attention to metre and rhythm is sometimes so extremely minute, as to be painful even to my ear; and you know how highly I prize good versification.<sup>2</sup>

If the presence of metre, then, is not accepted by these Romantics as a vital difference between prose and poetry, what distinctions, aside from those already mentioned in the consideration of poetic diction, does one find them making between these two forms of writing? There are no doubts in Shelley's mind on this point, for he says: "The distinction between poets and prose-writ-  
<sup>3</sup>ers is a vulgar error." As has been shown in a previous chapter,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 418-419.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. VI, Table Talk, pp. 284-285 (June 24, 1827).

<sup>3</sup> Defence, p. 7.



he calls Plato "essentially a poet." Why? Because "the truth and splendour of his imagery, and the melody of his language, are the most intense that it is possible to conceive."<sup>1</sup> Bacon, too, he speaks of as a poet, because of his sweet and majestic rhythms and the "superhuman wisdom of his philosophy."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, those who have instituted new systems of thought have produced poetry, in its broadest sense, inasmuch as their work is an "invention," unveils the truth of things, reveals the indestructible harmony and order—the latter of which, according to Shelley, is essentially the work of a poet—contains harmonious and rhythmical periods, and is "the echo of the eternal music."<sup>3</sup> Melody is thus associated very closely with poetry, in the opinion of Shelley. Also, a natural outcome of the position he takes on the subject of the nature of poetry, defined in its more extensive sense, would be that there is no real distinction between prose and poetry, because if those who possess those qualifications mentioned by him as characteristic of a poet work in accordance with the eternal principles of truth and reveal the inner harmony of things, what they produce—whether it be prose or poetry in the commonly accepted sense—will contain enough of the poetical element that it can be called poetry in the broader sense of the term. Also, even in those works which have

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



not developed the poetical faculty in the highest degree and which, therefore, one infers, should be spoken of as prose, there may occur, Shelley says, poetical parts.

When Shelley is speaking of poetry in its more restricted sense, and especially of his own poetic practice, he expresses a few opinions concerning style, from which it may be inferred that he does make some distinctions between this restricted kind of poetry and prose. These distinctions have already been shown in the quotations that have been made to illustrate his ideas of poetic diction.

Wordsworth, too would obliterate the distinction between poetry and prose, but for an entirely different reason from the one that is operative in the case of Shelley. Wordsworth would identify the two types of writing as far as their language is concerned; Shelley identifies them--those particular creations that are capable of being thus identified--because of the inner spirit that animates them as well as the similarity of effect produced by each on society. Wordsworth says, speaking of the reader of poetry:

And it would be a most easy task to prove to him that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written.<sup>1</sup>

Also, more emphatically:

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1

Wordsworth, p. 792 (Preface to Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads).





It may be safely affirmed that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.<sup>1</sup>

The remarks that have been quoted from Shelley on the subject of poetic diction do not show a sympathy with this point of view.

Coleridge, too, cannot accept this opinion expressed by Wordsworth, believing that a difference is shown in the combination of words as well as in the purpose of each style of writing.<sup>2</sup> In another passage Coleridge shows himself close to Shelley in his idea that there is something in the inner spirit and purpose of poetry, rather than accidental difference alone, to justify the name. Considering prose romances and novels, he says:

Would then the mere superaddition of metre, with or without rhyme, entitle these to the name of poems? The answer is, that nothing can permanently please [which pleasure, all these critics have said, is characteristic of poetry], which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so, and not otherwise.<sup>3</sup>

In poetry, according to Coleridge, the elements would be so combined, the words so arranged, that each part would contribute (as Shelley says of the Athenian drama) its quota to the total amount of pleasure derived from the whole<sup>4</sup>—another application of Coleridge's principle in criticism, "multitude in unity." This thought, Coleridge repeats, in a passage which contains some ideas curiously like those of Shelley's:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 793.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Coleridge, vol. III, Biographia Literaria, pp. 370-371.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 371.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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FAX 773-835-3101  
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The writings of Plato and Jeremy Taylor, and Burnet's *Theory of the Earth*, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contra-distinguishing objects of a poem. The first chapter of *Isaiah*—(indeed a very large proportion of the whole book)—is poetry in the most emphatic sense; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert, that pleasure, and not truth was the immediate object of the prophet. In short, whatever specific import we attach to the word, Poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry. Yet if an harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved in keeping with the poetry; and this can be no otherwise effected than by such a studied selection and artificial arrangement, as will partake of one, though not a peculiar property of poetry. All this again can be no other than the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at, whether colloquial or written.<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge thus shows himself willing to admit into the class of poetry that type of composition not distinguished by metre, provided there is perceived in it "an harmonious whole," the elements and their arrangement being such as to realize the purpose of poetry. The resemblance between what Coleridge says here and Shelley's remark containing the error of distinguishing between poets and prose writers is a suggestive one. Coleridge does maintain that the language of a serious poem is different from that of prose,<sup>2</sup> yet it is not upon the ground of language that Shelley is unwilling to make the common distinction between the two types of writing. There is a possibility that, if apparent--and possibly, superficial--differences were pruned away, what was left might show

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., p. 415.



a striking similarity of ideas between the two critics.

From the discussion in this chapter there can be gained some idea, possibly, of the relationship between the theories of Shelley and those of the other Romantics. In his absolute devotion to the spirit of poetry and his rhapsodic expression of his love for his art, Shelley is close to Keats. Both of them are like Wordsworth and Coleridge in the seriousness with which they contemplate their work. Byron is a notable exception to this point of view. All of them agree that the end of poetry is pleasure. With Shelley, however, this idea of pleasure is indissolubly bound up with the moral effect of poetry: a reader must first be attracted to, and admire, characters before he will desire to imitate them. Wordsworth stresses the ethical nature of poetry, but is more inclined than Shelley to emphasize the teaching side of it, this idea unrelieved, in many of his poems, by those qualities which Shelley feels are necessary to attract the reader before he will experience any moral benefit. Although Coleridge does not, in the manner of Shelley, combine the Beautiful and the Good, he admits a moral aim as one of the purposes of poetry.

All of them are also fairly well agreed as to the characteristics of the poets. Furthermore, all who have expressed opinions on the matter feel that metre is not essential to poetry, each modifying this view, to some extent. The position of Coleridge and Keats on the subject of poetic diction is akin to Shelley's, Wordsworth being the exception here. Shelley is sharply distinguished from the others in the more extended view that he takes of poetry; if anyone



The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The sixth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The seventh part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The eighth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The ninth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The tenth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people.



approaches him in this view, it is Coleridge.

Shelley is also different from the rest in his idea of the peculiar way in which poetry operates to produce a moral effect. Through all of them, with the exception of Byron, there runs the idea, characteristic of the Romantics in general, of the inspiration of genius, this idea expressed by Shelley most emphatically. In some ways Byron seems like a changeling in this group; he is also farther from Shelley in most of his ideas than are the others.

Shelley is the most inspired rhapsodist of them all. Wordsworth's theories show, at times, something of a pedantic quality; Coleridge makes an effort to apply to his criticism of poetry the principles of common sense; Byron does not consider his art seriously; Keats is attracted, in much of his work, to a sensuous, concrete beauty. Coleridge is by far the greatest critic of the group, but Shelley's wings carry him the highest; he is less philosophical and more impassioned than the older critic.

Fundamentally, the Romantics discussed in this chapter agree with the two Neo-Classicalists considered in the last on the matters of the end of poetry and the characteristics of the poet. None of them, however, stress reason in verse as do Boileau and Pope, although Coleridge does attempt to accommodate his poetic principles to the ends of common sense. He is also more like Boileau than Shelley in the specific directions given to writers. Shelley recognizes and expresses critical principles in connection with the writing of verse, but with him poetry and the art peculiar to it are primarily a passion.



## CHAPTER IV

### SHELLEY'S CRITICISM OF OTHER WRITERS

In the last two chapters consideration has been given to Shelley's expressions of opinion concerning poetry and the poets. The Defence has been compared with the critical works of two other apologists for poetry and two Neo-Classicists; a comparison has also been made of Shelley's ideas with those of four other major Romantics. It will be the purpose of this chapter to ascertain what Shelley has to say about the work of specific writers as he makes a definite application of his critical theories.

These comments on specific writers do not make up any systematic body of criticism, any more than do the general critical theories expressed by him. They are found scattered through his letters, where they appear as informal expressions of opinion; in his Prefaces, to some extent; and in his poems, to a lesser extent. As a matter of fact, setting himself up as a professional critic would probably have been the thing farthest from Shelley's mind. Critics and their tribe were not in very good repute with him, nor were those authors who allowed themselves to be influenced unduly by judgments from the supposedly Olympian heights. He does not hesitate to speak his mind on this matter:



It is the misfortune of this age that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together... If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings!<sup>1</sup>

Shelley was clear-sighted enough himself to see the faults that existed in the criticism of his day, and courageous enough to express his condemnation of them. His own remarks on specific writers are free from any venom of ill-will or malignity, even though he finds it necessary at times to express disapproval. Most of his comments seem to be characterized by that spirit of appreciation which formed a vital part of Romantic criticism.

The admiration Shelley felt for the ancient Greek writers has already been observed. It is their literature which exercises one of the most powerful influences upon him, and he has much to say concerning this literature in general as well as several creators of it in particular. A few quotations will show the high opinion which he holds of Greek literature as a whole:

Grecian literature,--the finest the world has ever produced, --was at length restored...<sup>2</sup>

But, omitting the comparison of individual minds, which can afford no general inference, how superior was the spirit and system of their poetry to that of any other period [Shelley is here speaking of the period intervening between the

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<sup>1</sup>

Preface to The Revolt of Islam.

<sup>2</sup>

Prose Works, vol. I, p. 422 (On the Revival of Literature).





birth of Pericles and the death of Aristotle] ! So that, had any other genius equal in other respects to the greatest that ever enlightened the world, arisen in that age, he would have been superior to all, from this circumstance alone--that his conceptions would have assumed a more harmonious and perfect form. For it is worthy of observation, that whatever the poets of that age produced is as harmonious and perfect as possible.<sup>1</sup>

[After a visit to Rome and the Colisem] I now understand why the Greeks were such great poets; and, above all, I can account, it seems to me, for the harmony, the unity, the perfection, the uniform excellence, of all their works of art. They lived in a perpetual commerce with external nature, and nourished themselves upon the spirit of its forms.<sup>2</sup>

I envy you the first reading of Theocritus. Were not the Greeks a glorious people?<sup>3</sup>

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, and their courage.<sup>4</sup>

I read the Greek dramatists and Plato for ever.<sup>5</sup>

The qualities mentioned here upon which Shelley bases his admiration of Greek literature are its unity of form, its perfection of outline, its harmony of parts, these qualities being also at the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., vol. II, p. 41 (On the Literature and Arts of the Athenians).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 275 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, January 26, 1819).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 307 (from a letter to John Gisborne, November 16, 1819).

<sup>4</sup> Preface to Hellas.

<sup>5</sup> Ingpen, p. 921 (from a letter to John Gisborne, October 22, 1821).



root of his esteem for the Athenian drama, which he eulogizes so highly in the Defence. Criteria of this sort are rather surprising in such a pure Romantic (according to Mr. More) as Shelley, and a tribute to the soundness of his taste.

In spite of his admiration for Greek literature as a whole, however, he does not hesitate to criticize individual works that appear below the standard of perfection characteristic of the best productions of these ancients. He says:

I have been reading with much pleasure the Greek romances. The best of them is the pastoral of Longus: but they are all very entertaining, and would be delightful if they were less rhetorical and ornate.<sup>1</sup>

There are several individual writers among the Greeks that he singles out for special attention, among them Aeschylus and Sophocles. Mrs. Shelley, in her notes to Prometheus Unbound, comments upon Shelley's admiration for Aeschylus:

The Greek tragedians were now [after Shelley had left England for the last time, in 1818] his most familiar companions in his wanderings, and the sublime majesty of Aeschylus filled him with wonder and delight. The father of Greek tragedy does not possess the pathos of Sophocles, nor the variety and tenderness of Euripides; the interest on which he founds his dramas is often elevated above human vicissitudes into the mighty passions and throes of gods and demi-gods: such fascinated the abstract imagination of Shelley.<sup>2</sup>

Shelley's admiration for the creations of Sophocles is expressed in the following quotation from a letter to John Gisborne (October

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<sup>1</sup>Rhys, p. 323 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, July 12, 1820).

<sup>2</sup>Hutchinson, p. 267.

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22, 1821):

You are right about Antigone; how sublime a picture of a woman! and what think you of the choruses, and especially the lyrical complaints of the godlike victim? and the menaces of Tiresias, and their rapid fulfilment? Some of us have, in a prior existence, been in love with an Antigone, and that makes us find no full content in any mortal tie.<sup>1</sup>

This letter illustrates Shelley's habit of communicating his own sympathies in literature to those in his immediate circle. He did not wish to admire alone, but was desirous that his friends and associates should feel the same delight that he had experienced in reading the works of the masters.

Homer and Plato are the two Greek writers for whom he expresses the most unqualified admiration. In addition to his eulogy of the former, already mentioned in the discussion of the Defence, Shelley says:

--But, as a poet, Homer must be acknowledged to excel Shakespeare in the truth, the harmony, the sustained grandeur, the satisfying completeness of his images, their exact fitness to the illustration, and to that to which they belong.<sup>2</sup>

Again, Shelley's criteria are the unity, the harmony, exhibited by a writer. Further evidence of the regard in which Shelley held Homer is seen in the number of translations made from the latter's works: Hymn to Mercury; Hymn to Castor and Pollux; Hymn to the Moon; Hymn to the Sun; Hymn to the Earth: Mother of All; Hymn to Minerva; Hymn to Venus.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>

Ingpen, p. 921.

<sup>2</sup>

Prose Works, vol. II, pp. 40-41 (On the Literature and Arts of the Athenians).

<sup>3</sup>

Cf. Hutchinson, pp. 673-696.





Shelley's translations fall, for the most part, between 1818 and 1822. Other Greek works, aside from the Platonic ones, which he translated into English are: The Cyclops, of Euripides; Fragment of the Elegy on the Death of Adonis, from Bion; Fragment of the Elegy on the Death of Bion and Pan, Echo, and the Satyr,<sup>1</sup> from Moschus, as well as From the Greek of Moschus.

Shelley's admiration for Plato, it has been pointed out, is one of the dominant influences on the former's life and work. Plato's name appears more often in his criticism than that of any other, unless it be Byron's, and Shelley's association with Byron was, because of the peculiar nature of various circumstances, unavoidably close. Shelley translated the Symposium of Plato, Ion, part of The Republic,<sup>2</sup> and several minor poems.<sup>3</sup> The great admiration expressed for Plato in the Defence has already been discussed, where Shelley calls this philosopher essentially a poet. In addition to the high praise given Plato here, Shelley calls him, in another essay,<sup>4</sup> "the wisest, the profoundest...among the ancients..." In a letter to Thomas Love Peacock (probably November 8, 1820), written at a time when Shelley was reading Spanish, together with Greek,<sup>5</sup> he says: "Plato and Calderon have been my gods." He also makes

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 696-715.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Prose Works, vol. II, pp. 53-132; 136-144.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hutchinson, p. 712.

<sup>4</sup> Prose Works, vol. I, p. 421 (On the Revival of Literature).

<sup>5</sup> Ingpen, p. 831.

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BY  
J. H. MANNING  
CHIEF OF BUREAU

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specific comments on several of the works of Plato in which he is chiefly interested:

I am employed just now, having little better to do, in translating into my fainting and inefficient periods, the divine eloquence of Plato's Symposium...<sup>1</sup>

The Symposium of Plato seems to me one of the most valuable pieces of all antiquity, whether we consider the intrinsic merit of the composition, or the light which it throws on the inmost state of manners and opinions among the ancient Greeks.<sup>2</sup>

What a wonderful passage there is in Phaedrus--the beginning, I think, of one of the speeches of Socrates--in praise of poetic madness, and in definition of what poetry is, and how a man becomes a poet.<sup>3</sup>

I have read some Greek but not much on my journey--two or three plays of Euripides--and among them the 'Ion,' which you praised and which (I think) is exquisitely beautiful.<sup>4</sup>

Of all the writings of Plato which Shelley read, it was the Symposium to which he was most strongly attracted. Reasons for his admiration of this work and further praise of its creator, he gives in the Preface to his translation:

The dialogue entitled 'The Banquet,' was selected by the translator as the most beautiful and perfect among all the works of Plato. He despaired of having communicated to the English language any portion of the surpassing graces of the composition, or having done more than present an imperfect shadow of the language and the sentiment of this astonishing production.

Plato is eminently the greatest among the Greek philosophers, and from, or, rather, perhaps through him, from his master Socrates, have proceeded those emanations of moral and

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<sup>1</sup> Prose Works, vol. II, p. 230 (from a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, July 10, 1818).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 232 (from a letter to William Godwin, July 25, 1818).

<sup>3</sup> Rhys, p. 230 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, August 16, 1818).

<sup>4</sup> Ingpen, pp. 599-600 (from a letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, April 30, 1818).





~~and~~ metaphysical knowledge, on which a long series and an incalculable variety of popular superstitions have sheltered their absurdities from the slow contempt of mankind. Plato exhibits the rare union of close and subtle logic with the Pythian enthusiasm of poetry, melted by the splendour and harmony of his periods into one irresistible stream of musical impressions, which hurry the persuasions onward, as in a breathless career. His language is that of an immortal spirit, rather than a man... His views into the nature of mind and existence are often obscure, only because they are profound; and though his theories respecting the government of the world, and the elementary laws of moral action, are not always correct, yet there is scarcely any of his treatises which do not, however stained by puerile sophisms, contain the most remarkable intuitions into all that can be the subject of the human mind. His excellence consists specially in intuition, and it is this faculty which raises him far above Aristotle, whose genius, though vivid and various, is obscure in comparison with that of Plato.<sup>1</sup>

The translation of the Symposium was begun nearly three years before Shelley wrote his Defence, yet the reasons for admiration expressed in both this Preface and the later work are much the same. One difference is that the latter essay contains no hint of adverse criticism, which Shelley expresses here; in spite of his admiration he detects "puerile sophisms" and incorrect views in some of his master's writings, faults which he minimizes, however. Shelley is here criticizing as a poet, for it is the intuitive faculty of Plato that wins the highest praise from him, and it is a stress upon this faculty that characterizes both Shelley's own productions and what he has to say about poetry, both in the Defence and elsewhere.

In a footnote he makes some interesting remarks about the Republic:

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Prose Works, vol. II, pp. 48-49.





The Republic, though replete with considerable errors of speculation, is, indeed, the greatest repository of important truths of all the works of Plato. This, perhaps, is because it is the longest. He first, and perhaps last, maintained that a state ought to be governed, not by the wealthiest, or the most ambitious, or the most cunning, but by the wisest; the method of selecting such rulers, and the laws by which such a selection is made, must correspond with and arise out of the moral freedom and refinement of the people.<sup>1</sup>

His idea that the Republic contains the most important truths because it is the longest work seems a little naïve, but shows, nevertheless, his high opinion of Plato. In this passage Shelley praises Plato because of the latter's social views, views which are similar to Shelley's, especially those he expresses in the Defence. It is Shelley's sympathy with these ideas of Plato; his appreciation of the poetical faculty in the Greek philosopher, manifesting itself both in the harmony of his language and the poetical quality of his thoughts; and, also, as Miss Winstanley points out, the views of Plato on the subject of love, that attract Shelley to him.

The ancient Latin writers do not receive much attention from Shelley, probably because of the view, expressed in the Defence, that the "true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions..."<sup>2</sup> He does rank Lucretius as a creator in the highest sense, and Virgil in a very high sense.<sup>3</sup> He also makes a translation from the latter: From Vergil's Fourth Georgic.<sup>4</sup> Of Virgil, he says also: "The chosen

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> P. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Hutchinson, p. 717. .



delicacy of expressions of the latter are as a mist of light which conceal from us the intense and exceeding truth of his conceptions of nature."<sup>1</sup> He feels, too, that Plutarch and Livy were poets, because parts of their compositions were poetical.<sup>2</sup> He says further of the latter, "Livy is instinct with poetry."<sup>3</sup> In judging these two writers Shelley is applying his more extended definition of poetry, and finds in the work of each some "spark of inextinguishable thought."<sup>4</sup> He mentions Horace, Catullus, and Ovid, "and generally the other great writers of the Virgilian age,"<sup>5</sup> as poets "who saw man and nature in the mirror of Greece."<sup>6</sup> Shelley gives high praise to Lucan, saying:

I have also read the four finest books of Lucan's Pharsalia --a poem, as it appears to me, of wonderful genius and transcending Virgil.<sup>7</sup>

The Italian writers, like the Greek, rank very high in Shelley's estimation. His admiration for Boccaccio has already been mentioned in the discussion of the Defence. He says of this Italian:

He is, in a high sense of the word, a poet, and his language has the rhythm and harmony of verse. I think him not equal certainly to Dante or Petrarch, but far superior to Tasso and Ariosto, the children of a later and of a colder day...

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<sup>1</sup> Defence, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Rhys, p.184 (from a letter to Thomas Hefferson Hogg, September, 1815).

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What descriptions of nature are those in his little introductions to every new day! It is the morning of life stripped of that mist of familiarity which makes it obscure to us. Boccaccio seems to me to have possessed a deep sense of the fair ideal of human life, considered in its social relations. His more serious theories of love agree especially with mine.<sup>1</sup>

Again Shelley, in his judgment of an individual writer, applies his broad definition of poetry, and again he expresses admiration for a writer because of his sympathy with this writer's social theories and ideas of love. His liking for the descriptions of nature in Boccaccio is also interesting.

Dante and Petrarch, however, are the Italians whom Shelley admires the most. In them, as in Boccaccio, he sees energy, simplicity, and unity of idea, and says they are far above Ariosto and Tasso in this respect.<sup>2</sup> The high regard in which he holds both Dante and Petrarch has been pointed out in the discussion of the Defence, and one of the reasons for the praise given to both in this essay is their treatment of the poetry of love. He also realizes what both did in bringing about a revival of literature after the Dark Ages, saying:

In the fifteenth century of the Christian era, a new and extraordinary event roused Europe from her lethargic state, and paved the way to her present greatness. The writings of Dante in the thirteenth, and of Petrarch in the fourteenth, were the bright luminaries which had afforded glimmerings of literary knowledge to the almost benighted traveller toiling up the hill of Fame.<sup>3</sup>

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Prose Works, vol. II, pp. 294-295 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, September 27, 1819).

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Ibid., p. 295.

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Ibid., vol. I, p. 420 (On the Revival of Literature).



The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present. The author then goes on to discuss the various factors which have shaped the development of the United States, including the influence of the British, the Spanish, and the French. He also discusses the role of the American people in the creation of the nation. The paper concludes by stating that the study of the history of the United States is a task of great importance, and that it is one which should be undertaken by all who are interested in the future of the country.

The second part of the paper discusses the various factors which have shaped the development of the United States. It is argued that the influence of the British, the Spanish, and the French has been a major factor in the development of the country. The author also discusses the role of the American people in the creation of the nation. He states that the American people have played a major role in the development of the country, and that they have been responsible for the creation of the United States. The paper concludes by stating that the study of the history of the United States is a task of great importance, and that it is one which should be undertaken by all who are interested in the future of the country.



In his essay On the Literature and Arts of the Athenians Shelley, in a comparison of Greek literature with Italian, remarks:

Perhaps Dante created imaginations of greater loveliness and energy than any that are to be found in the ancient literature of Greece. Perhaps nothing has been discovered in the fragments of the Greek lyric poets equivalent to the sublime and chivalric sensibility of Petrarch... Nor could Dante, deficient in conduct, plan, nature, variety, and temperance, have been brought into comparison with these men [Homer and Shakespeare], but for those fortunate isles, laden with golden fruit, which alone could tempt any one to embark in the misty ocean of his dark and extravagant fiction.<sup>1</sup>

It is for the surpassing loveliness and grandeur of Dante's imagination that Shelley praises him in the Defence. The critical acumen Shelley shows in his consideration of Dante is marked; as Mr. R. W. King has said, Shelley was practically the only Englishman of his time to appreciate thoroughly the sublime genius of the Italian writer. Petrarch, too, he ranks with Dante, although not so high. In a contrast of Ariosto with Petrarch he speaks of the latter's "tender and solemn enthusiasm..."<sup>2</sup>

Ariosto and Tasso, Shelley definitely ranks below Dante and Petrarch. Concerning Ariosto, he says:

We have almost finished Ariosto—who is entertaining and graceful, and sometimes a poet. Forgive me, worshippers of a more equal and tolerant divinity in poetry, if Ariosto pleases me less than you. Where is the gentle seriousness, the delicate sensibility, the calm and sustained energy, without which true greatness cannot be? He is so cruel, too, in his descriptions; his most prized virtues are vices almost without disguise. He constantly vindicates and embellishes revenge in its grossest form; the most deadly superstition that ever infested the world.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., vol. II, pp. 40-41.

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>3</sup>

Ibid.



Shelley's criteria for ranking other poets above Ariosto are clearly stated in the passage quoted above. It is also interesting to observe that in his judgment of this writer he uses ethical standards—after all, Shelley never departs far from the view that poetry should represent "moral idealisms." He contrasts the qualities of Ariosto that he has mentioned here with "the delicate moral sensibility of Tasso, though somewhat obscured by an assumed<sup>1</sup> and artificial style." Shelley's dislike for affectation in style has been noticed in the Defence. Also, it is on moral grounds that he condemns Ariosto and praises Tasso. It is necessary, however, that he make allowances for the latter, because Tasso does not always exhibit the courage in the face of tyranny that Shelley would like to see a poet show. After reading Tasso's sonnets to his "persecutor," Shelley says:

But to me there is much more to pity than to condemn in these entreaties and praises of Tasso... Tasso's situation was widely different from that of any persecuted being of the present day; for, from the depth of dungeons, public opinion might now at length be awakened to an echo that would startle the oppressor. But then there was no hope. There is something irresistibly pathetic to me in the sight of Tasso's own hand-writing, moulding expressions of adulation and entreaty to a deaf and stupid tyrant, in an age when the most heroic virtue would have exposed its possessor to hopeless persecution, and—such is the alliance between virtue and genius—which unoffending genius could not escape.<sup>2</sup>

Shelley would use the appreciation of Dante as a touchstone for poetic taste. After speaking of a young person who has interested herself in reading, Shelley remarks: "When she becomes of her

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 247 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, November 8, 1818).





own accord full of genuine admiration for the finest scene in the 'Purgatorio,' or the opening of the 'Paradiso,' or some other neglected piece of excellence, hope great things."<sup>1</sup>

Among the Spanish writers Calderon is the one who arouses intense admiration in Shelley. Just as he translated selections from Dante, so did he ~~with~~ scenes from the Magico Prodigioso of Calderon as well as stanzas from the latter's Cisma de Inglaterra.<sup>2</sup> In view of these translations the following quotations are especially interesting:

Let me recommend you who know Spanish to read some plays of their great dramatic genius Calderon. I have been reading 'La Devocion della Cruz'<sup>3</sup> and the 'Purgatorio di San Patricio,' in both of which you will find specimens of the very highest dramatic power--approaching Shakespeare...<sup>4</sup>

I have been reading Calderon in Spanish. A kind of Shakespeare is this Calderon; and I have some thoughts, if I find that I cannot do anything better, of translating some of his plays.<sup>5</sup>

With respect to translation, even I will not be seduced by it; although the Greek plays, and some of the ideal dramas of Calderon (with which I have laterly, and with inexpressible wonder and delight, become acquainted) are perpetually tempting me to throw over their perfect and glowing forms the grey veil of my own words.<sup>6</sup>

This temptation is one to which Shelley finally yields, although he, like Coleridge, feels that no translation can do justice to a work of poetry.

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<sup>1</sup>Ingpen, p. 978 (from a letter to John Gisborne, June 18, 1822).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Hutchinson, pp. 717-740.

<sup>3</sup>Footnote by Mr. Ingpen (p. 702): "A slip of Shelley's pen for 'La Devocion de la Cruz,' and 'El Purgatorio de San Patricio.'"

<sup>4</sup>Ingpen, p. 702 (from a letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, July 25, 1819).

<sup>5</sup>Rhys, p. 286 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, probably August 22, 1819).

<sup>6</sup>Ingpen, p. 755 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, November, 1819).





Another expression of opinion concerning Calderon is of interest, for it gives some reasons for Shelley's admiration of the dramatist. He says concerning this author and his work:

I have read about 12 of his plays. Some of them certainly deserve to be ranked among the grandest and most perfect productions of the human mind. He exceeds all modern dramatists, with the exception of Shakespeare, whom he resembles, however, in the depth of thought and subtlety of imagination of his writings, and in the rare power of interweaving delicate and powerful comic traits with the most tragical situations, without diminishing their interest. I rate him far above Beaumont and Fletcher.<sup>1</sup>

Two years later, in the Defence, Shelley again compares Shakespeare and Calderon, saying the latter "has attempted to fulfil some of the high conditions of dramatic representation neglected by Shakespeare..."<sup>2</sup> He criticizes Calderon, however, in the same essay, because of the "distorted" superstitions present in his work--Shelley's feeling about any form of superstition is always strong.

Perhaps no further evidence will be needed, however, to show Shelley's genuine admiration of the Spanish dramatist than the remark that has been quoted before from one of Shelley's letters: "Plato and Calderon have been my gods."

The names of French writers, especially in comparison with those of the Italian, appear rarely in Shelley's works. And it is during the early period of his life that he mentions them. As has been pointed out in the first chapter, he expresses some admiration for d'Holbach, Helvetius, and Condorcet with respect to the principles expressed in their writings. But he also criticizes the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 719 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, September 21, 1819).

<sup>2</sup> P. 14.



last two named because "their conclusions were unsystematical, and<sup>1</sup> devoid of the luminousness and energy of method." It was enough<sup>2</sup> for Shelley, too, that Voltaire "was the flatterer of kings."

Shelley has a little more to say concerning Rousseau. In the Proposals he condemns this writer for fostering the spirit of servitude among his fellow-beings by giving license to passions "that only incapacitate and contract the human heart."<sup>3</sup> In other places, where he is not applying the same standard of judgment, the extent to which a writer has assisted in developing the spirit of liberty, he finds things in Rousseau to admire. Writing back to England from his tour of Switzerland, he says:

This journey has been on every account delightful, but most especially, because then I first knew the divine beauty of Rousseau's imagination, as it exhibits itself in Julie. It is inconceivable what an enchantment the scene itself lends to those delineations, from which its own most touching charm arises.<sup>4</sup>

Here Shelley is again judging a writer by the quality of the imagination he reveals. Shelley is also showing himself susceptible once more to the charm of natural scenery, which charm, he says, is enhanced by the fact that Rousseau has used it as a setting for Julie. In another part of the same letter one finds Shelley blending again the charm of the scenery with the attraction of the imagination that has enshrined it:

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<sup>1</sup>

Prose Works, vol. I, p. 279 (Proposals for an Association).

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>

Prose Works, vol. I, p. 333 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, July 12, 1816).





I read Julie all day; an overflowing, as it now seems, surrounded by the scenes which it has so wonderfully peopled, of sublimest genius, and more than human sensibility. Mellerie, the Castle of Chillon, Clarens, the mountains of La Valais and Savoy, present themselves to the imagination as monuments of things that were once familiar, and of beings that were once dear to it. They were created indeed by one mind, but a mind so powerfully bright as to cast a shade of falsehood on the records that are called reality.<sup>1</sup>

Shelley visits the summer-house at Lausanne where, he says, Gibbon wrote the last sentence of his great work, and refrains from following the example of his companion, who gathers some acacia leaves to preserve in memory of the historian. Shelley explains his feeling on this matter:

I refrained from doing so, fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau; the contemplation of whose imperishable creations had left no vacancy in my heart for mortal things. Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now that Julie and Clarens, Lausanne and the Roman empire, compelled me to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon.<sup>2</sup>

This passage is interesting, for it shows Shelley's love for the poetical qualities in a man, none of which he believes Gibbon exhibits. Also, there may be a suggestion here of the difference, marked in Shelley's mind, between the poetic and the coldly rationalistic systems of thought. Furthermore, what he says about Lausanne and the Roman Empire suggests that some extra-literary consideration has impelled him to this contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon, unflattering as it is to the latter. Shelley's admiration of Rousseau seems to be based largely on the imagination exhibited by this writer, together with the intensity of his poetic

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 343-344.





sensibility.

From the little that Shelley says of them, one is inclined to believe that his acquaintance with the German writers was slight, especially as compared with the familiarity he shows with the Italians and the Greeks. Wieland, he mentions in one essay, saying that in his "delightful novels," he "makes indeed a very tolerable Pagan, but cherishes too many political prejudices, and refrains from diminishing the interest of his romances by painting sentiments in which no European of modern times can possibly sympathize."<sup>1</sup> In his objections to this author's exhibiting political prejudices in a work of literature, Shelley seems on sure ground. He also expresses an opinion concerning one of Schiller's plays: "I have read, since I saw you, the 'Jungfrau von Orleans' of Schiller,—a fine play, if the fifth act did not fall off."<sup>2</sup> This criticism seems, on the whole, just. One cannot but be struck, too, by the mastery of languages which Shelley, in the midst of all his other work and the harassing circumstances of his life, had been able to acquire.

Goethe seems to have made a rather strong impression on Shelley, especially in his drama Faust. Shelley comments thus on this play:

I have been reading over and over again Faust, and always with sensations which no other composition excites. It deepens the gloom and augments the rapidity of ideas, and would

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<sup>1</sup> Prose Works, vol. II, p. 44 (On the Literature and Arts of the Athenians).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 352 (from a letter to John Gisborne, October 22, 1821).



therefore seem to me an unfit study for any person who is a prey to the reproaches of memory, and the delusions of an imagination not to be restrained. And yet the pleasure of sympathising with emotions known only to a few, although they derive their sole charm from despair, and the scorn of the narrow good we can attain in our present state, seems more than to ease the pain which belong to them. Perhaps all discontent with the less (to use a Platonic sophism) supposes the sense of a just claim to the greater, and that we admirers of Faust are on the right road to Paradise. Such a supposition is not more absurd, and is certainly less demoniacal than that of Wordsworth, where he says—

'This earth,  
Which is the world of all of us, and where  
We find our happiness, or not at all.'

As if, after sixty years' suffering here, we were to be roasted alive for sixty million more in hell, or charitably annihilated by a coup-de-grâce of the ~~first~~ bungler who brought us into existence at first!

Have you read Calderon's Magico Prodigioso? I find a striking similarity between Faust and this drama, and if I were to acknowledge Coleridge's distinction, should say that Goethe was the greatest philosopher, and Calderon the greatest poet.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage Shelley once more touches upon the pleasure that lies in sorrow and despair, an idea which he has expressed the year before in the Defence. The quotation is also interesting in its revelation of Shelley's philosophic ideas and his disagreement with those expressed by Wordsworth on the subject under consideration. The comparison and contrast he draws between Goethe and Calderon is a suggestive one and appears to be based on sound judgment. One also notices from what Shelley says here that he still clings to the idea presented in the Defence of a more extended definition of poetry, even though he is willing to waive this idea temporarily and

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Ibid., pp. 353-354 (from a letter to John Gisborne, April 10, 1822).





accept the different view of Coleridge's. Further evidence that this drama of Goethe's made a strong impression on Shelley is seen in the fact that he translates two scenes from it.<sup>1</sup>

English writers receive much attention from Shelley; he makes critical comments concerning a great many of them, both the minor authors and those who are better known, but gives the highest praise to Milton and Shakespeare. Both of these authors he discusses at length in the Defence, where he expresses great admiration for them (see Thesis, pp. 120-122; 98-99). It will be noticed that, in this essay, he bases his admiration for Milton on the latter's knowledge of human nature, his familiarity with the laws of epic truth, his "bold neglect of a great moral purpose," his conferring upon modern mythology a "systematic form," and his revealing a spirit of poetry "deeply penetrated with the ancient religion of the civilised world." In the same essay Shelley expresses admiration for Shakespeare because of the latter's showing the "living impersonations of the truth of human passions," especially in King Lear, which, Shelley practically admits, is "the most perfect specimen of the dramatic art existing in the world," being superior to Oedipus Tyrannus and Agamemnon in the universality, the ideality, and the sublimity of its comedy.

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Cf. Hutchinson, pp. 740-753.





In the discussion of one of his critical ideas, that there is a resemblance between all the writers of any particular age, he gives as illustrations of this theory "the tragic poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakespeare, Spenser, the dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon; the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded..."<sup>1</sup> The name of Milton is conspicuously absent from this list; in a footnote Shelley adds: "Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined."<sup>2</sup> Praising further Milton's independence of thought, Shelley says:

We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion.<sup>3</sup>

The same thought, Shelley expresses in verse:

I DREAMED that Milton's spirit rose, and took  
From life's green tree his Uranian lute;  
And from his touch sweet thunder flowed, and shook  
All human things built in contempt of man,—  
And sanguine thrones and impious altars quaked,  
Prisons and citadels...<sup>4</sup>

The praise which Shelley, in the Defence, gives King Lear and its peers in the drama, is practically a repetition of what he has

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<sup>1</sup> Preface to The Revolt of Islam.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to Prometheus Unbound.

<sup>4</sup> Hutchinson, p. 627, Fragment: Milton's Spirit.



said two years before: "The deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions King Lear and the two plays in which the tale of Oedipus is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakespeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind."<sup>1</sup> The only difference between this remark and the later one is that, in the Defence, Shelley names only one play of Sophocles, substituting the Agamemmon for the other. King Lear holds the same position that it did in the earlier comment. One more remark is indicative of the high esteem in which Shelley holds the Elizabethan dramatist: "Perhaps Shakespeare, from the variety and comprehension of his genius, is to be considered, on the whole, as the greatest individual mind, of which we have specimens remaining."<sup>2</sup> This is high praise, even with the qualifying effect of the "Perhaps."

Bacon, too, is a writer for whom Shelley expresses the greatest admiration. In the Defence he calls this man a poet, saying:

His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm, which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect; it is a strain which distends, and then bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy.<sup>3</sup>

In his Preface to the translation of the Symposium Shelley remarks

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<sup>1</sup> Preface to The Cenci.

<sup>2</sup> Prose Works, vol. II, p. 40 (On the Literature and Arts of the Athenians).

<sup>3</sup> P. 8.





that Bacon is, perhaps, the only writer who can be compared to Plato in the quality of his language. Bacon is also frequently quoted, especially in Shelley's early works.

Shelley also pays noticeable attention to the writers of his own time, although, as has been stated, he never sets himself up as a formal critic, nor does he stoop to use the methods employed by some of the reviewers of his day. He makes a few comments concerning minor authors of his age. His opinion of Horace Smith is expressed in verse:

--Wit and sense,  
Virtue and human knowledge; all that might  
Make this dull world a business of delight,  
Are all combined in Horace Smith.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to Charles Ollier he says of the latter's work: "In Altham you have surprised and delighted me. It is a natural story, most unaffectedly told; and, what is more, told in a strain of very pure and powerful English, which is a very rare merit."<sup>2</sup> Although Shelley probably shows here more generosity of spirit than critical acumen—characteristic of a number of opinions expressed by him on works of his friends—yet the remark is interesting because of the admiration he reveals for naturalness and lack of affectation (a dislike of affectation is met with often in Shelley's expressions of opinion) as well as for the praise given by him to Ollier's diction. A comment that he makes on the work of B. W. Procter (Barry Corn-

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Maria Gisborne, ll. 246-250.

<sup>2</sup> Rhys, p. 289 (Letter of September 6, 1819).





wall) is also of interest:

Of course with my next box you will send me the Dramatic Sketches. I have only seen the extracts in the Examiner. They have some passages painfully beautiful. When I consider the vivid energy to which the minds of men are awakened in this age of ours, ought I not to congratulate myself that I am a contemporary with names which are great, or will be great, or ought to be great?<sup>1</sup>

In this passage Shelley again makes his characteristic association of pleasure with pain, admiring a work that exhibits this peculiar blending of qualities. There is also seen the admiration for energy of mind which he expresses often.

Another expression of opinion concerning a minor writer shows again Shelley's predisposition to generosity where the works of his friends are concerned. He published a curious critical review in 1814 of the Memoirs of Prince Alexy Haimatoff, which work came out under the name of John Brown, Esq., but was in reality written by Thomas Jefferson Hogg. Although the praise is too generous, some of the passages in this review are of interest in revealing Shelley's bases for judgments. He praises the work for its "subtle delicacy of imagination," its "delineation of the more evanescent feelings and uncommon instances of strong and delicate passion," the individuality of the characters portrayed, the naturalness and beauty of one of the episodes, and closes his review with these words:

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Ibid., p. 310 (from a letter to Charles Ollier, December 15, 1819).



We do not hesitate to assert that the author of this volume is a man of ability. His great though indisciplineable energies and fervid rapidity of conception embody scenes and situations, and passions affording inexhaustible food for wonder and delight. The interest is deep and irresistible. A moral enchanter seems to have conjured up the shapes of all that is beautiful and strange to suspend the faculties in fascination and astonishment.<sup>1</sup>

Shelley's acuteness of critical sense does not desert him entirely, however, for he also remarks concerning the work:

As a composition the book is far from faultless. Its abruptness and angularities do not appear to have received the slightest polish or correction. The author has written with fervor, but has disdained to revise at leisure. These errors are the errors of youth and genius and the fervid impatience of sensibilities impetuously disburthening their fulness.<sup>2</sup>

Shelley was only twenty-two himself when he wrote this last sentence. Another thing of interest in the review is Shelley's basing his judgment of the character, Alexy, on grounds that are largely ethical and that remind one of his desire, expressed many times, to see "moral idealisms" represented, in poetry, at any rate. That this idea was in his mind from an early date can be seen from the fact that this review was written in 1814.

Shelley has something to say about two other writers of his time, who are of greater importance than those already mentioned. At the age of eighteen he makes this remark concerning Mrs. Hemans and her work: "Now, there is Miss F. D. Browne (certainly a tigress), yet she surpasses my sister in poetical talents—this very dispassionate criticism must allow..."<sup>3</sup> This, of course, is rather

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<sup>1</sup> Prose Works, vol. II, pp. 395-396.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 389.

<sup>3</sup> Ingpen, p. 123 (from a letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, July 28, 1811).





doubtful praise when one considers the extent of poetical ability demonstrated by Shelley's sister. Mr. Ingpen adds a note to this letter, in which he says: "Medwin states that these poems [Poems of Felicia Dorothea Browne, printed at Liverpool in 1808] 'made a powerful impression on Shelley,' who addressed some letters to the youthful poetess, but that her mother wrote to Medwin's father begging him to use his influence with Shelley to stop the correspondence."<sup>1</sup>

What Shelley says concerning Mary Shelley's novel Frankenstein is also of interest, for it shows very well those qualities which he considers of value in a work of this form. He says that it is "as a mere story, one of the most original and complete productions of the day."<sup>2</sup> Also, "The interest gradually accumulates and advances towards the conclusion with the accelerated rapidity of a rock rolled down a mountain."<sup>3</sup> He remarks upon the affection and innocence of the sentiments, then proceeds to apply again an ethical standard of judgment, speaking with admiration of the moral contained in the work. He calls the "Being" in the book "a tremendous creature."<sup>4</sup> He says that the scene between this Being and the blind De Lacey "is one of the most profound and extraordinary instances of pathos that we ever recollect."<sup>5</sup> He feels that the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Prose Works, vol. I, p. 417.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 419.





scene in the cabin of Walton's ship "is an exhibition of intellectual and imaginative power, which we think the reader will acknowledge has seldom been surpassed."<sup>1</sup> This manifestation of imaginative power on the part of the author, and the fact that the novel is "a source of powerful and profound emotion,"<sup>2</sup> appear to be the qualities in the work most attractive to Shelley. Most of his criticism here is based on firm grounds and shows that he had an adequate conception of the nature of the novel as a literary form. These remarks and those he makes on Godwin's works are, however, practically the only ones in which he expresses an opinion of this type of writing; he is concerned primarily, in his criticism, with poetry and the drama in poetic form.

Leigh Hunt, a friend of both Keats and Shelley, and a man of greater importance in his expression of political, social, and religious ideas than in his poetry, is another writer whom Shelley considers. He was attracted to Hunt originally by sympathy with the latter's principles and admiration for the fearlessness shown in his writings. Critical comments on this man's work are expressed in the following passages:

When will you send me your poems? I never knew, that you had published any other than 'Rimini,' with which I was exceedingly delighted. The story of the poem has an interest of a very uncommon and irresistible character,—though it appeared to me that you have subjected yourself to some rules in the composition which fetter your genius, and diminish the

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., p. 417.



effect of the conceptions. Though in one sense I am no poet, I am not so insensible to poetry as to read 'Rimini' unmoved.--<sup>1</sup>

I have read 'Foliage:' with most of the poems I am already familiar. What a delightful poem 'The Nymphs' is! especially the second part. It is truly poetical, in the intense and emphatic sense of the word... what a pity that... the poem is not as faultless as it is beautiful.<sup>2</sup>

I am sorry to hear that you have employed yourself in translating 'Aminta,' though I doubt not it will be a just and beautiful translation. You ought to write Amintas. You ought to exercise your fancy in the perpetual creation of new forms of gentleness and beauty.<sup>3</sup>

I think I have never told you how very much I like your 'Amyntas;' it almost reconciles me to translations. In another sense I still demur. You might have written another such poem as the 'Nymphs,' with no great excess of efforts.<sup>4</sup>

I am exceedingly curious to see your tragedy. It appears to me that you excel in the power of delineating passion, and, what is more necessary, of connecting and developing it.<sup>5</sup>

Shelley's remarks concerning the weaknesses of The Story of Rimini are sound; the strength of this piece of work undoubtedly lies in its narrative element, the poetry itself exhibiting the same faults that are observable in the early work of Keats. Shelley detects these weaknesses, as may be seen in his comments on the Nymphs, although he much prefers that Hunt should engage in original work rather than in translations. Shelley's remarks about the difficulty

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<sup>1</sup> Ingpen, p. 530 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, December 8, 1816).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 589 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, March 22, 1818).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 755 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, November, 1819).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 909-910 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, August 26, 1821). Shelley is referring here to Hunt's Amyntas; a Tale of the Woods, translated from Tasso, and published in 1820.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 771 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, April 5, 1820).

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life.

The second part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem of the origin of life.

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of connecting and developing the passion in a tragedy are interesting, because they put into words a weakness noticeable in Shelley's own work.

Godwin is another intimate of Shelley's whose work he criticizes. In an early letter, written when he was eighteen, Shelley says:

Have you read Godwin's 2 'St. Leon'--1 his 'Inquirer'--his 3 'Political Justice'--his 4 'Caleb Williams'?--1 is very good. 2 is good, very good. 3 is long, skeptical, good. 4 is good. I put them in the order that I would advise you to read them.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter written the next year Shelley makes this remark about Godwin: "His letters are like his writings, the mirror of a firm and elevated mind."<sup>2</sup> In his review of Godwin's Mandeville, which review appeared in the Examiner (1817), signed with the initials E. K. (Mary Shelley's familiar name for Shelley was Elfin Knight), Shelley makes some interesting comments on this author and his work. He says that Godwin "is one of the most illustrious examples of intellectual power of the present age."<sup>3</sup> Shelley admires Mandeville because "The events of the tale flow like the stream of fate, regular and irresistible..."<sup>4</sup> This is the same characteristic that he admires in Frankenstein. He says that in this respect Mandeville "is more powerful than 'Caleb Williams'; the interest of 'Caleb Williams' being as rapid, but not so profound, as that of

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<sup>1</sup>Ingpen, p. 177 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, November 26, 1811).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 225 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, January 20, 1812).

<sup>3</sup>Prose Works, vol. I, p. 412.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 414.

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<sup>1</sup>  
 'Mandeville.'" He also praises the work for the richness and  
 variety of its language, as well as the "energy and distinctness  
<sup>2</sup>  
 of its expressions." In a letter written to Godwin Shelley makes  
 comments on the same novel:

I have read 'Mandeville,' but I must read it again soon, for the interest is of that irresistible and overwhelming kind, that the mind in its influence is like a cloud borne on by an impetuous wind... I think the power of 'Mandeville' is inferior to nothing you have done and, were it not for the character of Falkland, no instance in which you have exerted that power of creation which you possess beyond all contemporary writers, might compare with it. Falkland is still alone; power is, in Falkland, not, as in 'Mandeville,' tumult hurried on by the tempest, but tranquillity standing unshaken amid its fiercest rage. But 'Caleb Williams' never shakes the deepest soul like 'Mandeville.' It must be said of the latter, you rule with a rod of iron... In style and strength of expression, 'Mandeville' is wonderfully great, and the energy and the sweetness of the sentiments scarcely to be equalled. Clifford's character, as mere beauty, is a divine and soothing contrast; and I do not think—if, perhaps, I except (and I know not if I ought to do so) the speech of Agathon in the Symposium of Plato—that there ever was produced a moral discourse more characteristic of all that is admirable and lovely in human nature—more lovely and admirable in itself—than that of Henrietta to Mandeville, as he is recovering from madness.<sup>3</sup>

In the light of the estimation in which the novels of Godwin are held to-day, one feels that these remarks of Shelley's are over-generous. He is on fairly sure ground, however, in his selecting as his criteria for judgment of a novel the interest that it has for the reader, and the movement of the events. Also, it is recognized by critics of the present day that Godwin's works do reveal energy of mind. Shelley's extremely high praise of one scene is based, it will be noticed, on his approval of the moral sentiments

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>  
 Ingpen, pp. 566-567 (from a letter to William Godwin, December 7, 1817).



expressed by one of the characters in this scene.

In a letter written as late as 1820, Shelley makes another interesting remark concerning this man who has been the object of his youthful hero-worship: "You know that added years only add to my admiration of his intellectual powers, and even the moral re-  
<sup>1</sup>  
sources of his character." In spite of the fact that Godwin's ideas have ceased to influence Shelley to the extent that was noticeable in his youth, he can still admire what he considers the intellectual greatness of the man. This expression of admiration, it is true, may have been colored by the fact that Godwin was at that time his father-in-law and was in serious financial trouble when this letter was written. Yet Shelley's words here are another tribute to his generosity of spirit, especially if one considers the constant demands on Shelley's purse made by the impecunious philosopher.

Thomas Love Peacock is an interesting figure in Shelley's circle of friends. In spite of that aspect of his mind which disliked the Romantics he was genuinely and sincerely fond of Shelley, and the two kept up a steady correspondence with each other. The influence of Peacock's Four Ages of Poetry in prompting Shelley's Defence has been discussed in a previous chapter. Shelley remarks  
<sup>2</sup>  
of this essay, "it is very clever, but, I think, very false."

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., p. 785 (from a letter to John and Maria Gisborne, May 26, 1820).

<sup>2</sup>  
Rhys, p. 313 (from a letter to Charles Ollier, January 20, 1820).





Shelley's further critical comments on the work of Peacock, together with the progress of their acquaintanceship, will be shown in passages from Shelley's letters, the selections being given in chronological sequence.

[Written before Shelley became acquainted with Peacock]  
I shall take the liberty of retaining the two poems which you have sent me (Mr. Peacock's), and only regret that my powers are so circumscribed as to prevent me from becoming <sup>extensively</sup> useful to your friend. The poems abound with a genius, an information, the power and extent of which I admire, in proportion as I lament the object of their application. Mr. Peacock conceives that commerce is prosperity; that the glory of the British flag is the happiness of the British people; that George III, so far from having been a warrior and a tyrant, has been a patriot. To me it appears otherwise; and I have rigidly accustomed myself not to be seduced by the loveliest eloquence or the sweetest strains to regard with intellectual toleration that which ought not to be tolerated by those who love liberty, truth, and virtue. I mean not to say that Mr. Peacock does not love them; but I mean to say that he regards those means [as] instrumental to their progress, which I regard [as] instrumental to their destruction... At the same time I am free to say that the poem appears to me far beyond mediocrity in genius and versification, and the conclusion of 'Palmyra' the finest piece of poetry I ever read.<sup>1</sup>

This is not bad criticism from a youth of twenty, even though the poem may seem in this day slightly over-rated. One interesting thing about Shelley's remarks is his objecting to the works on the ground of those ideas in them which are contrary to the political and social sentiments so ardently cherished by him.

The first impression made by Peacock on Shelley, as recorded by the latter, is interesting.

A new acquaintance is on a visit with us this winter. He is a very mild, agreeable man, and a good scholar. His enthusiasm is not very ardent, nor his views very comprehensive; but he is neither superstitious, ill-tempered, dogmatical, or proud.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ingpen, p. 359 (from a letter to Thomas Hookham, August 18, 1812).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 415 (from a letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, November 26, 1813).

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
JANUARY 1950

TO THE HONORABLE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
SUBJECT: A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF RESEARCH  
DURING THE YEAR 1949

The Department of Chemistry has been fortunate in having a very successful year. The research program has been carried out in a most efficient manner, and the results have been of a high quality. The following is a summary of the work done during the year 1949.

The first part of the report deals with the work of the various research groups. The second part deals with the administrative matters of the department. The third part deals with the financial matters of the department. The fourth part deals with the general matters of the department.



The quotation is interesting not only in its rather acute analysis of Peacock, but in its revelation of those qualities of mind and spirit that were agreeable to Shelley. This liking for Peacock seems more pronounced in the next quotation, which also refers to two novels of the latter:

Peacock is the author of 'Headlong Hall,'--he expresses himself much pleased by your approbation--indeed, it is approbation which many would be happy to acquire! He is now writing 'Melincourt' in the same style, but, as I judge, far superior to 'Headlong Hall.' He is an amiable man of great learning, considerable taste, an enemy to every shape of tyranny and superstitious imposture.<sup>1</sup>

Shelley's remarks on another novel of Peacock's show some degree of critical acumen, for the work he is commenting on is something of a masterpiece in its own rather mocking fashion.

I am delighted with 'Nightmare Abbey.' I think Scythrop a character admirably conceived and executed; and I know not how to praise sufficiently the lightness, chastity, and strength of the language of the whole.<sup>2</sup>

Shelley's remarks here are made more interesting by the fact that he felt himself to be the original of the character, Scythrop.

Shelley's reaction to Peacock's reception of The Cenci is described in the following passage:

--I have just heard from P[ea]cock, saying, that he don't think that my tragedy will do, and that he don't much like it. But I ought to say, to blunt the edge of his criticism, that he is a nursling of the exact and superficial school of poetry.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ingpen, p. 531 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, December 8, 1816).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 694 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, June 20 or 21, 1819).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 727 (from a letter to Maria Gisborne, October 13 or 14, 1819).

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The contrast between Peacock's ideas of poetry and those of Shelley's is well brought out here; furthermore, time has proved that Shelley was more nearly correct in his judgment of The Cenci than Peacock was.

In another passage Shelley does not show quite the same critical acumen—he is attempting to rank some of the novels of Peacock.

May you start into life some day and give us another 'Melincourt.' Your 'Melincourt' is exceedingly admired, and I think how much more so than any of your other writings. In this respect the world judges rightly. There is more of the true spirit, and an object less indefinite, than in either 'Headlong Hall' or Scythrop.<sup>1</sup>

Some remarks that Shelley makes about Charles Lamb show a rather fine sense of discrimination.

What a lovely thing is his 'Rosamund Gray,' how much knowledge of the sweetest and the deepest parts of our nature is in it! When I think of such a mind as Lamb's—when I see how unnoticed remain things of such exquisite and complete perfection, what should I hope for myself, if I had not higher objects in view than fame?—<sup>2</sup>

Shelley's regard for Thomas Moore was also high; his opinion may have been influenced somewhat by Byron, of course. Shelley says of Moore:

My admiration of the character, no less than of the genius of Moore, makes me wish that he should not have an ill opinion of me.<sup>3</sup>

→ Pray thank Moore for his obliging message. I wish I could as easily convey my sense of his genius and character.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ingpen, pp. 830-831 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, probably November 8, 1820).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 712 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, September 3, 1819).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 960 (from a letter to Horace Smith, April 11, 1822).

<sup>4</sup>Prose Works, vol. II, p. 361 (from a letter to Horace Smith, June 22, 1822).





The opinions that Shelley expresses of the other major Romantic poets are of much interest. He says a number of things about Wordsworth, for whom he seems to have had a rather constant admiration in spite of the fact that all of Wordsworth's poetry was not pleasing to him. It has been shown, too, in the discussion of Shelley's critical comments on Faust that Shelley did not agree with the philosophy expressed in one of Wordsworth's poems; namely, that one must find happiness on this earth, or not at all.<sup>1</sup> Yet Shelley intends to confer on Wordsworth a sincere compliment when he says: "Godwin has been to the present age in moral philosophy what Wordsworth is in poetry."<sup>2</sup> His admiration for Wordsworth in 1812 is based largely on his liking for the latter's political sentiments; he says:

Wordsworth (a quondam associate of Southey), yet retains the integrity of his independence...<sup>3</sup>

Although Wordsworth's later actions were not so pleasing to Shelley, he never lost his admiration for the older poet's genius. Wordsworth's poem A Poet's Epitaph made a strong impression on Shelley. In another letter written in 1812 he quotes a number of stanzas from this poem, as he has heard them from Southey, and remarks:

I have transcribed a piece of Wordsworth's poetry. It may give you some idea of the Man. How expressively keen are the first stanzas! I shall see this man soon.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ingpen, p. 953 (from a letter to John Gisborne, April 10, 1822).

<sup>2</sup>Prose Works, vol. I, p. 413 (from Shelley's Review of Mandeville).

<sup>3</sup>Ingpen, p. 198 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, December 15, 1811).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 208 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, January 2, 1812).





Shelley did not, however, admire Peter Bell, as may be seen from the following stanza from one of Shelley's own poems:

Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years  
 Considering and retouching Peter Bell;  
 Watering his laurels with the killing tears  
 Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to Hell  
 Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the spheres  
 Of Heaven, with dewy leaves and flowers; this well  
 May be, for Heaven and Earth conspire to foil  
 The over-busy gardener's blundering toil.<sup>1</sup>

Although Peter Bell is in a little higher repute to-day with some critics than it has been in the past, yet Shelley's comments on it seem, for the time, justifiable. This poem prompted Shelley's own Peter Bell the Third, which appears on the surface to be a satire of the older poet and his work. Mrs. Shelley, however, has a different opinion on the matter, and expresses it in her Note on Shelley's poem:

A critique on Wordsworth's Peter Bell reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly, and suggested this poem.

I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the author of Peter Bell is intended in this poem. No man ever admired Wordsworth's poetry more;—he read it perpetually, and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet—a man of lofty and creative genius—quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious errors; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardour for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind, but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted, even as transcendently as the author of Peter Bell, with the highest qualities of genius, must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dulness. This poem was written as a warning—not as a narration of the reality.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>To Mary: IV.

<sup>2</sup>Hutchinson, pp. 357-358.



This quotation from Mrs. Shelley gives evidence of the high regard in which Shelley held Wordsworth, a regard that was not changed essentially, but was moved to grief, by what Shelley considered Wordsworth's deserting of liberty, a feeling expressed by Shelley in the following sonnet:

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know  
That things depart which never may return:  
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,  
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.  
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine  
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.  
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine  
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:  
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood  
Above the blind and battling multitude:  
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave  
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—  
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,  
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.<sup>1</sup>

Southey does not receive such considerate treatment at Shelley's hands. Shelley's early admiration for this poet has been mentioned in a previous chapter, but a change comes over his feelings, a change, together with the reasons therefor, which will be shown in the following quotations from his letters, chronologically arranged.

I have not seen Southey: he is not now at Keswick. Believe that on his return I will not be slow to pay homage to a really great man.<sup>2</sup>

Southey has changed. I shall see him soon, and I shall reproach him for his tergiversation.--He to whom Bigotry, Tyranny, Law was [sic] hateful, has become the votary of these idols in a form the most disgusting.--<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>To Wordsworth

<sup>2</sup>Ingpen, p. 171 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, November 23, 1811).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 197 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, December 15, 1811).

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
5408 S. UNIVERSITY AVE.  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
5408 S. UNIVERSITY AVE.  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

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5408 S. UNIVERSITY AVE.  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

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But Southey, though far from being a man of great reasoning powers, is a great Man. He has all that characterizes the poet,—great eloquence, tho' obstinacy in opinion, which arguments are the last things that can shake... He is a man of virtue, he will never belie what he thinks... His professions are in strict compatibility with his practice.—1

Now of Southey. He has lost my good opinion. No private virtues can compensate for public language like this. The following passage is Southey's writing: the Ed [in]burgh An [n]ual Register. 'We are not displeased at the patriotic expedient to which the worthy Sir Francis' (italics in original) 'has thus recourse; as it seems to show how contemptible are the Burdettite and Wardleite members, whose nature is debased by the vile views of faction, and whose unmanly feelings and ungenerous hearts forbid their sympathy in a case which—to the everlasting honour of the country be it related—so deeply interests' (speaking of Spain) 'with keen solicitude the fond bosoms of a people'—(now mark this disgusting abominable flattery, and horrible lie—I can't contain myself)—'who, in duly appreciating his transcendent virtues, prove themselves deserving the best Monarch that ever adorned a throne.'—Now what think you of this? I can only exclaim with Bolingbroke, 'Poor human nature!' We have now serious thoughts of immediately going to Ireland. Southey's conversation has lost its charm; except it be the charm of horror at so hateful a prostitution of talents.<sup>2</sup>

I passed Southey's house without one sting. He is a man who may be amiable in his private character, stained and false as is his public one, he may be amiable; but, if he is, my feelings are liars, and I have been so long accustomed to trust to them in these cases, that the opinion of the world is not the likeliest criminator to impeach their credibility.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in the impetuosity of his youth and his passionate hatred of anything that savors of truckling to the powers that be, does Shelley impeach Southey. These strong feelings influence Shelley to such an extent that he is not able at this time to look upon

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 200 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, December 26, 1811).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 226-227 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, January 20, 1812).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 250 (from a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, February 3, 1812).





Southey and his work without prejudice. Another interesting thing is that all of these letters are written to Elizabeth Hitchener, to whom Shelley seems to have been in the habit of expressing his thoughts rather freely. Less reserve on several subjects can be noted in the letters to her than in those to other correspondents.

Four years later Shelley's feelings seem to have moderated enough for him to send Southey a copy of Alastor, with an apology for not writing Southey from Ireland. Shelley says in this letter (March 7, 1816):

Let it be sufficient that, regarding you with admiration as a poet, and with respect as a man, I send you, as an intimation of those sentiments, my first serious attempt to interest the best feelings of the human heart, believing that you have so much general charity as to forget, like me, how widely in moral and political opinions we disagree, and to attribute that difference to better motives than the multitude are disposed to allege as the cause of dissent from their institutions.<sup>1</sup>

There is more trouble later, however, for in 1820, Shelley writes Southey to ascertain if the latter is the author of a criticism that has appeared in the Quarterly Review, on The Revolt of Islam. Although Southey is able to reply in the negative, he tells Shelley that, even though he has respect for the latter's powers as a poet, yet he does not like the way in which Shelley has employed these powers, and has no desire to see any more of "productions so

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Ibid., p. 471.

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monstrous in their kind, and pernicious in their tendency."<sup>1</sup> The result of this is that Shelley writes another letter (August 17, 1820) defending himself against Southey's charges, and suggesting that further correspondence between them will be tiresome and useless. Thus, when the chapter of their relationship is finished, there is misunderstanding on both sides, and Shelley no longer expresses the admiration he once felt for this man and his work. The entire story shows how strong Shelley's feelings were on political and social matters and how they were likely at times to influence his judgment of someone who, in his opinion, had betrayed the spirit of liberty. Shelley's association with Byron also would not have helped Southey's cause; both poets came to have the same opinion of the Laker's political sentiments.

Shelley says much less about Coleridge than about Southey; there is not the same political and moral feud between them. What Shelley does say about the other shows, however, an active interest in him and his work, and is entirely favorable to him, as will be seen in the following passages from Shelley's letters.

Tell me of the political state of England--its literature, of which when I speak Coleridge is in my thoughts...<sup>2</sup>

We have just got the etchings of 'Faust,' the painter is worthy of Goëthe. The meeting of him and Margaret is wonderful.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., p. 818.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ingpen, p. 504 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, July 17, 1816).

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It makes all the pulses of my head beat--The translations, both these and in Blackwood, are miserable. Ask Coleridge if their stupid misintelligence of the deep wisdom and harmony of the author does not open him to action.<sup>1</sup>

[After asserting his inability to translate satisfactorily scenes from Faust] No one but Coleridge is capable of this work.<sup>2</sup>

In one of his poems also Shelley pays tribute to the genius of Coleridge, his lines showing a just praise tempered by a discriminating mind.

You will see Coleridge--he who sits obscure  
In the exceeding lustre and the pure  
Intense irradiation of a mind,  
Which, with its own internal lightning blind,  
Flags wearily through darkness and despair--  
A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,  
A hooded eagle among blinking owls.--<sup>3</sup>

Only one mention of Scott appears in Shelley's letters (Mr. Ingpen's Collection), and that is merely a reference to a review of Scott's in Blackwoods's giving praise to Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein.<sup>4</sup> Professor Dowden says (II, p. 303) that Shelley wrote the other poet an immediate acknowledgement of this article.

In contrast to his silence on the work of Scott Shelley has a great deal to say about Keats and his poetry. Shelley's letter in behalf of his brother poet to the editor of the Quarterly Journal has already been mentioned. Adonais will always remain, however, Shelley's enduring monument to the memory of Keats, even though not

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 931 (from a letter to John Gisborne, January, 1822).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 954 (from a letter to John Gisborne, April 10, 1822).

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Maria Gisborne, ll. 202-208.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ingpen, p. 610 (from a letter to William Godwin, July 25, 1818).





only one but all neglected and ill-used poets are eulogized here. In addition to these evidences of interest in and sympathy for Keats, there are passages in Shelley's letters that contain criticisms of the former's work. After reading a copy of Endymion sent to him, Shelley says:

For the second in this list, much praise is due to me for having read it, the author's intention appearing to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it. Yet it is full of some of the highest and the finest gleams of poetry; indeed, everything seems to be viewed by the mind of a poet which is described in it. I think, if he had printed about fifty pages of fragments from it, I should have been led to admire Keats as a poet more than I ought, of which there is now no danger.<sup>1</sup>

This criticism of Endymion is, on the whole, a just one. Like others, Shelley feels the poem is too long, yet he is able to detect real genius in the work. In a letter to Keats himself Shelley is distinctly encouraging to the other poet, although frank in his expression of opinion as to the weakness of this work.

I have lately read your 'Endymion' again, and even with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains, though treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion. This people in general will not endure, and that is the cause of the comparatively few copies which have been sold. I feel persuaded that you are capable of the greatest things, so you but will.<sup>2</sup>

About two months before this letter Shelley has also written:

Keats, I hope, is going to show himself a great poet; like the sun, to burst through the clouds, which, though dyed in the finest colours of the air, obscured his rising.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rhys, p. 289 (from a letter to Charles Ollier, September 6, 1819).

<sup>2</sup> Ingpen, p. 809 (from a letter to John Keats, July 27, 1820).

<sup>3</sup> Rhys, p. 318 (from a letter to Charles Ollier, May 14, 1820).

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It was Hyperion, though, that appealed most to Shelley. Of this poem he says: "it is certainly an astonishing piece of writing, and gives me a conception of Keats which I confess I had not before."<sup>1</sup> About the same time Shelley says in another letter: "the fragment called 'Hyperion' promises for him that he is destined to become one of the first writers of the age. His other things are imperfect enough, and, what is worse, written in the bad sort of style which is becoming fashionable among those who fancy they are imitating Hunt and Wordsworth."<sup>2</sup> The acuteness of the last part of this criticism is evident, for it is rather generally acknowledged that it wasn't until Keats ceased being influenced by others and developed his own vein in poetry that his work became of the greatest value. It may be that Shelley's high regard for Milton led him to such a pronounced admiration for this poem which Keats finally abandoned because of its "Miltonic inversions." Shelley says, finally, of the poem: "if the 'Hyperion' be not grand poetry, none has been produced by our contemporaries."<sup>3</sup>

Shelley sends a copy of Adonais to Joseph Severn, Keats's devoted friend, and writes:

In spite of his transcendent genius, Keats never was, nor ever will be, a popular poet; and the total neglect and obscurity in which the astonishing remnants of his mind still lie, was hardly to be dissipated by a writer, who, however he may differ

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., p. 327 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, probably November 15, 1820).

<sup>2</sup>

Ingpen, pp. 838-839 (from a letter to Marianne Hunt, November 11, 1820).

<sup>3</sup>

Ibid., p. 848 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, February 15, 1821).





from Keats in more important qualities, at least resembles him in that accidental one, a want of popularity.<sup>1</sup>

Time has disproved somewhat the prophecy contained in these remarks, and has also done more for Shelley in the way of popularity than he could have believed possible during his days on this earth.

Shelley was also wrong about Keats on another point, for the former believed the death of the younger poet to be indirectly the result of hostile reviews of his poetry. In his Preface to Adonais Shelley says:

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud?

Shelley is giving voice here to the same erroneous opinion of Keats prevalent during his own time and not entirely overcome in the present day. He is discriminating enough to realize, however, that the name of this poet will one day be enshrined in the hearts of men, saying in his Fragment on Keats:

WHO DESIRED THAT ON HIS TOMB SHOULD BE INSCRIBED--  
'Here lieth One whose name was writ on water.'  
But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,  
Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,  
Death, the immortalizing winter, flew  
Athwart the stream,--and time's printless torrent grew  
A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name  
Of Adonais!

In view of Shelley's close association with Byron, what he has to say of the latter is of great interest. One strange thing about this close association is the feeling of inferiority engendered in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 922 (from a letter to Joseph Severn, November 29, 1821).

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Shelley, and yet not so strange, perhaps, in the light of Byron's peculiar personality, which loved to hold the limelight. Shelley says in this connection:

I do not write; I have lived too long near Lord Byron, and the sun has extinguished the glow-worm; for I cannot hope, with St. John, that 'the light came into the world, and the world knew it not.'<sup>1</sup>

In his Sonnet to Byron Shelley expresses similar feelings:

I am afraid these verses will not please you, but  
If I esteemed you less, Envy would kill  
Pleasure, and leave to Wonder and Despair  
The ministration of the thoughts that fill  
The mind which, like a worm whose life may share  
A portion of the unapproachable,  
Marks your creations rise as fast and fair  
As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.  
But such is my regard that nor your power  
To soar above the heights where others [climb],  
Nor fame, that shadow of the unborn hour  
Cast from the envious future on the time,  
Move one regret for his unhonoured name  
Who dares these words:—the worm, beneath the sod  
May lift itself in homage of the God.

Together with this feeling of inferiority there were aroused in Shelley disgust at many of Byron's actions and impatience with certain phases of his character. These sentiments, Shelley expresses to a close friend:

Particular circumstances, or rather, I should say, particular dispositions in Lord Byron's character, render the close and exclusive intimacy with him in which I find myself intolerable to me; thus much, my best friend, I will confess and confide to you.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., p. 963 (from a letter to Horace Smith, May, 1822).

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., p. 945 (from a letter to Leigh Hunt, March 2, 1822).

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Shelley has tried for a long time to put up with these peculiar phases of Byron's nature, and has shown himself charitable in the view he holds of the man, for in a letter written about fifteen months before the one just referred to, he says:

[After discussing imitations of Byron's work] Is not the vulgarity of these wretched imitations of Lord Byron carried to a pitch of the sublime? His indecencies, too, both against sexual nature, and against human nature in general, sit very awkwardly upon him. He only affects the libertine: he is really a very amiable, friendly, and agreeable man, I hear. But is not this monstrous? In Lord Byron all this has an analogy with the general system of his character, and the wit and poetry which surround hide with their light the darkness of the thing itself. They contradict it even; they prove that the strength and beauty of human nature can survive and conquer all that appears most inconsistent with it.<sup>1</sup>

Here, Shelley, the idealist, excuses and minimizes the faults of Byron, the materialist and libertine, still keeping his faith in the power of poetry and human nature at its best. He gives no further clue in his letters to the "particular circumstances" which made him resolve in 1822 to break his close association with the other poet. A suggestion of adverse criticism is given in his

Fragment: To Byron:

O mighty mind, in whose deep stream this age  
Shakes like a reed in the unheeding storm,  
Why dost thou not curb thine own sacred rage?

The opinion Shelley holds of Byron's character, he does not allow, however, to prejudice his judgments of the other's poetry. Many of his remarks concerning specific poems are of interest. He says of Don Juan:

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Ibid., p. 839 (from a letter to Marianne Hunt, November 11, 1820).

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He read me the first canto of his 'Don Juan'--a thing in the style of 'Beppo,' but infinitely better, and dedicated to Southey, in ten or a dozen stanzas, more like a mixture of wormwood and verdigrease than satire.<sup>1</sup>

He has read to me one of the unpublished cantos of Don Juan, which is astonishingly fine. It sets him not only above, but far above, all the poets of the day--every word is stamped with immortality. I despair of rivalling Lord Byron, as well I may, and there is no other with whom it is worth contending. This canto is in the style, but totally, and sustained with incredible ease and power, like the end of the second canto. There is not a word which the most rigid asserter of the dignity of human nature would desire to be cancelled. It fulfils, in a certain degree, what I have long preached of producing--something wholly new and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful. It may be vanity, but I think I see the trace of my earnest exhortations to him to create something wholly new.<sup>2</sup>

Shelley's suggestion here of a possible influence of his own on this canto of Don Juan is by no means all vanity; he did not realize, as Byron did, that no man could live near him for any length of time and not feel some effect from the emanation of his personality.

Shelley's judgment of this poem is sound in many respects, for Don Juan is considered by most critics to-day as Byron's best poem. Yet Shelley's sense of inferiority again steps in and results in his giving Byron more praise than he deserves, in spite of the excellence of the work under discussion.

In the next passage Shelley shows an aversion to Childe Harold, and in this judgment he does mix ethical with artistic considerations.

I entirely agree with what you say about 'Childe Harold.' The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 628 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, October 8, 1818).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 894 (from a letter to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, August 9, 1821).





and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself. I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one. Nothing can be less sublime than the true source of these expressions of contempt and desperation.<sup>1</sup>

Shelley goes on to say that the "true source" is found in the low and disgusting character of the Italian women with whom Byron is associating at the time.

Shelley speaks of a new work which Byron has in mind:

He is occupied in forming a new drama, and, with views which I doubt not will expand as he proceeds, is determined to write a series of plays, in which he will follow the French tragedians and Alfieri, rather than those of England and Spain, and produce something new, at least, to England. This seems to me the wrong road; but genius like his is destined to lead and not to follow. He will shake off his shackles as he finds they cramp him. I believe he will produce something very great; and that familiarity with the dramatic power of human nature will soon enable him to soften down the severe and unharmonising traits of his 'Marino Faliero.'<sup>2</sup>

This objection to Marino Faliero because of its lack of harmony shows Shelley's application of one of his principal criteria of criticism.

Other poems of Byron's win the admiration of Shelley. He says concerning them:

Of course you have seen his last volume, and if you before thought him a great poet, what is your opinion now that you have read 'Cain?' The 'Foscari' and 'Sardanapalus' I have not seen; but as they are in the style of his later writings, I doubt not they are very fine.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 650-651 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, December 22, 1818).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 912 (from a letter to Horace Smith, September 14, 1821).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 928 (from a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, probably January 11, 1822).

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The Human Gallbladder, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 130  
The Human Pancreas, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 140  
The Human Spleen, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 150  
The Human Kidney, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 160  
The Human Uterus, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 170  
The Human Vagina, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 180  
The Human Cervix, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 190  
The Human Vagina, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 200  
The Human Cervix, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 210  
The Human Vagina, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 220  
The Human Cervix, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 230  
The Human Vagina, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 240  
The Human Cervix, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 250  
The Human Vagina, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 260  
The Human Cervix, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 270  
The Human Vagina, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 280  
The Human Cervix, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 290  
The Human Vagina, by J. H. Greenough, Esq., F.R.S. 300

What think you of Lord Byron's last volume? In my opinion it contains finer poetry than has appeared since the publication of 'Paradise Regained.' 'Cain' is apocalyptic--it is a revelation not before communicated to man.<sup>1</sup>

This praise seems exaggerated; one reason for it was probably the fact that Shelley, admiring fearlessness of thought wherever he found it and disapproving of the religious teachings of his day, found in Cain a rebel after his own heart.

A quotation from Shelley's Lines Written among the Euganean Hills also expresses generous praise of Byron and shows a regret for some of the circumstances of his life:

Perish—let there only be  
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea  
As the garment of thy sky  
Clothes the world immortally,  
One remembrance, more sublime  
Than the tattered pall of time,  
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;--  
That a tempest-cleaving Swan  
Of the songs of Albion,  
Driven from his ancestral streams  
By the might of evil dreams,  
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean  
Welcomed him with such emotion  
That its joy grew his, and sprung  
From his lips like music flung  
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,  
Chastening terror:—what though yet  
Poesy's unfailing River,  
Which through Albion winds forever  
Lashing with melodious wave  
Many a sacred Poet's grave,  
Mourn its latest nursling fled?  
What though thou with all thy dead  
Scarce can for this fame repay  
Aught thine own? oh, rather say  
Though thy sins and slaveries foul

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid., p. 955 (from a letter to John Gisborne, April 10, 1822).



Overcloud a sunlike soul?  
 As the ghost of Homer clings  
 Round Scamander's wasting springs;  
 As divinest Shakespeare's might  
 Fills Avon and the world with light  
 Like omniscient power which he  
 Imaged 'mid mortality;  
 As the love from Petrarch's urn,  
 Yet amid yon hills doth burn,  
 A quenchless lamp by which the heart  
 Sees things unearthly;--so thou art,  
 Mighty spirit--so shall be <sup>1</sup>  
 The City that did refuge thee.

For a man who never thought of himself as a professional critic Shelley has given a surprisingly large number of opinions concerning specific authors and their works. The theories expressed by him in the Defence and elsewhere are again apparent in his judgments of particular writers. This is especially true of the stress he lays on the imagination; the possession of this quality raises an author immediately in Shelley's regard, while the absence of it means, to Shelley, the lack of an exceedingly vital element in both the creator and that which he produces. In the importance that he ascribes to this characteristic Shelley reveals himself as an outstanding representative of the age to which he belonged. There are other reflections of Romantic ideas noticeable in his criticisms of individual writers, among them his emphasis on strong feeling in a work of art; it is for this that he chiefly values Rousseau, the father of an age of feeling.

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Lines Written among the Euganean Hills, ll. 161-205. The city to which Shelley refers is Venice.





In addition, he shows a marked sympathy with ideas of liberty and a dislike for tyranny of any sort—this attitude strikingly evident in his admiration for Byron's portrait of a rebel against tradition and belief. His love of nature, <sup>noticeable to a slight extent,</sup> also connects him with the Romantics, although there is no reflection in his critical opinions of the back-to-nature movement, the stress on the simple and the primitive, sired by Rousseau and so apparent in the ideas of Wordsworth.

His judgments of specific writers show an application of those theories which bring him in harmony with the Neo-Classicalists, his admiration for the ancient Greek authors and their art, his high regard for the standards of unity and proportion.

In these remarks on particular authors he shows a marked discrimination of mind in his ability to appreciate at their true worth such poets as Dante, Milton, and Shakespeare, at a time when such an appreciation of these writers, especially Dante and Milton, was by no means general. His critical opinions of many other writers are characterized by acuteness; when he errs, the reason appears to be too great a generosity of spirit, as in the case of a friend; or some other extra-literary prejudice, such as his hatred of superstition or his dislike of certain political habits of thought, the latter being noticeable in the case of Southey. His tendency to apply ethical judgments is also noticeable. On the whole, however, he seems to have done a good piece of work in these criticisms of individual writers.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS--SHELLEY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO CRITICISM

Any appraisal of Shelley's ideas must be based upon the bulk of his work in the Defence, together with the fragments gleaned from his letters, Prefaces, and poems. His theories are not arranged in any systematic form; one writer remarks concerning him: "Being an enthusiast rather than a critic, he made little effort to reduce his multiform ideas and impressions to strict order..."<sup>1</sup> Also, his aesthetic views and critical opinions are often so closely interwoven that it is difficult to disentangle them, this close connection between them being one of the distinguishing features of his criticism. One idea appears to be fundamental in his life and in his thought, his "conception of Love as the supreme spirit and sole productive source of good in the life of the world."<sup>2</sup> He was a poet and a poetic critic, but he was also a reformer at heart, and this aspect of his thinking is carried over into his criticism. Believing ardently in the necessity and the possibility of changing for the better conditions in the world, he feels that this change must begin in the individual mind and will be accelerated by the influence of poetry. This art, he feels, will directly affect

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<sup>1</sup>Stovall, Floyd, "Shelley's Doctrine of Love," PMLA, XLV, 283.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



the imagination, "the great instrument of moral good"; when the imagination is stimulated, the reader will identify himself with the characters portrayed; this going out of his own nature is, Shelley says, synonymous with love, "the great secret of morals." The accompanying enlarging of sympathies will, Shelley believes, bring man closer to his fellow-man and thus remove the causes of discord and misery. These thoughts are basic in the theories expressed in the Defence concerning the moral effect of poetry--and it is in this moral effect that Shelley is chiefly interested. One critic remarks concerning the phase of his work just described: "For an 'ineffectual angel,' as Arnold called him, Shelley has been the most potent warrior of ideas in modern time. He is the pioneer of pioneers."<sup>1</sup>

This fundamental blending of Shelley's aesthetic theories with his ethical concepts must be borne in mind in any appraisal of his critical ideas, for many of them are closely related to his position in this matter. In the consideration of these critical theories it will be most advisable to view them as they have been expressed in the various phases of his work discussed in the preceding chapters.

Many of the theories expressed in the Defence are similar to those found in the works of the other critics considered,

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<sup>1</sup>Moore, C. L., "Shelley Once More," Dial, LV, 194.





his admiration for Greek poetry and the unity of parts as exemplified there, his ideas concerning the function and the importance of poetry, his high opinion of the creators of this art. Shelley remarks that one reason why the poems of Homer were such a delight to their hearers was that the author "embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character," that his listeners admired, imitated, and finally identified themselves with the characters represented. Thus Shelley applies to Greek literature his idea of the way in which high poetry should operate in order to produce a moral effect, and finds in this literature something which satisfies the ethical as well as the artistic side of his nature. This is a slightly different method of procedure from that of the other critics. As far as unity is concerned, that principle of Greek poetry, which satisfies the artistic demands made by Shelley, his point of view is the same as that of the other critics. He differs from Sidney and Boileau, however, in his using as a standard only this one unity, the harmonious relationship of parts to one another and to the whole, and saying nothing concerning any other unity.

All of the critics considered believe that it is the function of poetry to yield both pleasure and edification. Shelley's description of the delight given by poetry is, however, much more ardent and impassioned than that of any of the others, Sidney being



the closest to him here. Shelley, too, is the critic who insists upon such a combination of delight and edification that there will be no question about the revitalizing and regenerating power of poetry when it acts, in its own artistic way, to produce the desired moral effect. Sidney approaches his thought on this point also, but the earlier critic does not, any more than do Boccaccio, Boileau, and Pope, suggest anything that resembles Shelley's explanation of the way in which poetry will affect the reader. Also, this regenerating power of poetry is the very breath of life to Shelley; the artist in him cannot but take pleasure in such an exquisite thing as verse, but the reformer in him vindicates his art by showing that it has a definite moral effect--although operating in an artistic manner--upon its readers.

This attitude toward poetry has a great influence upon Shelley's opinion of the poet. He believes that the man who can produce work capable of bringing about these effects must be among the wisest, the happiest, and the best of mankind. The other critics agree with him as to the essential nobility of mind of a genuine writer, but do not state, as Shelley states, that the poet is of such a nature precisely because he is a poet. Nor do they emphasize, as Shelley does, the idea that the poet is among the best of men. This idealistic view of the poet is a natural result of Shelley's idealistic view of his art.



It is Shelley, moreover, who stresses most the inspiration of the poet. All of the critics considered agree that the creator of verse is moved by some influence outside himself and relate this influence to a divine source. But, given this natural endowment, the poet, they believe, should work as other men work to accomplish a task, this labor as essential as the original poetic impulse. Shelley emphasizes more the "moments of inspiration," and less the care and pains taken with a poem. He is in sharp contrast here to the two Neo-Classicalists, especially Boileau, who lays much stress on the necessity of hard work in connection with the writing of something of merit. Shelley states that he does not believe the "best parts" of a poem to be produced by this method. Thus nature is, to him, more important than art, the last word being used in the meaning given to it in the old controversy between the relative merits of art and nature in a poet's composition. Shelley does stress the use of vivid imagery in a poem, the outward manifestation of that "inextinguishable spark" of thought characterizing the poetic wherever it may appear.

In addition to the ideas common to Shelley and all the other critics discussed in the second chapter, there is a specific relationship between the Defence and the apologies of Boccaccio and Sidney. Like them, Shelley is motivated by the desire to defend poetry against its detractors, and also like them makes use of





arguments to refute the objections that may be offered to poetry. The Defence is different in the less direct and more impersonal tone of its replies; also, there is only one argument that Shelley answers specifically. Boccaccio and Sidney, like Shelley, maintain that poetry is a useful art, but go into the matter less thoroughly than is the case with Shelley. He concentrates his fire on this attack of the utilitarians; by his definitions of the term, also by his relating poetry directly to that which is most useful, according to the meaning he gives the word, and indirectly to utility in its narrower sense, he not only repels the charge but carries the fight into the camp of the enemy.

Another similarity in the Defence to ideas expressed by Boccaccio and Sidney is the thought that poetry occasionally "veils the truth." Although Shelley stresses more the power of poetry to reveal the truth, he remarks that it is sometimes necessary to veil it, that the grandeur and splendor of the poet's original conceptions are at times of such a nature that verse must "spread its own figured curtain" lest the view be too dazzling for those whose minds have not been illumined by the poet's vision. Boccaccio believes that poetry often obscures the truth that it may not be cheapened.

Still another idea expressed by Shelley is similar to one held by the Italian-Elizabethan critics of the Renaissance



and given a prominent place in Sidney's Apology. That is, poetry's being able to give splendor and dignity to any idea that it handles. Boileau, too, considers this important, believing, as Shelley does, that poetry has the power of transmuting base metal. Both of them make use of this idea in their treatment of the drama, a form receiving detailed consideration in the Defence as well as in L'Art Poétique, although Boileau is much concerned with the giving of practical advice to playwrights, and Shelley is chiefly interested in the moral effect of this type of art. This effect Shelley finds even when the drama embodies representations that are not "moral idealisms," for poetry, according to Shelley, not only makes beautiful that which is distorted, but in its handling of characters presents even the imperfect in such a way that the reader or hearer will gain a knowledge of the human heart.

It is the "moral idealism," however, that Shelley stresses most in the Defence; it is this that is the most closely related to his conception of the effect of all good poetry and the most vital in his thought of the peculiar way in which poetry will act to produce a moral effect. His explanation of this process is based upon psychological grounds, which he does not explain fully but which, none the less, make his idea an interesting and suggestive one. Poetry, he says, acts upon the

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It mentions the use of surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather information from stakeholders. Additionally, it discusses the application of statistical analysis to interpret the collected data.

3. The third part describes the process of identifying key performance indicators (KPIs) and how they are used to measure the organization's progress towards its goals. It highlights the need for regular monitoring and reporting on these indicators.

4. The fourth part focuses on the role of communication in the overall process. It stresses the importance of clear and consistent communication between all levels of the organization to ensure that everyone is aligned with the same objectives and understands their role in achieving them.

5. The fifth part discusses the challenges faced during the implementation of the process and how they were overcome. It mentions issues such as resistance to change and lack of resources, and provides examples of successful strategies used to address these challenges.

6. The sixth part presents the results of the study, showing the positive impact of the implemented process on the organization's performance. It includes data and statistics that demonstrate the improvement in various key areas.

7. The seventh part offers conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. It suggests that the implemented process should be continued and refined over time to further enhance the organization's efficiency and effectiveness.

8. The eighth part provides a brief overview of the organization's future plans and goals, indicating how the lessons learned from this study will be integrated into the overall strategic vision.

imagination, "the great instrument of moral good," by feeding it with thoughts that are both delightful and beneficial. These "thoughts of ever new delight" will, through some law of association, attract to themselves other thoughts, and any room that is left will be filled with the new ideas that are constantly being derived as one reads poetry. The person whose imagination has thus been stimulated will admire and identify himself with the characters presented in the poem, this identification being a going out of one's self, as Shelley calls it, and a process synonymous with love, "the great secret of morals." The man with a quickened imagination "puts himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own."

This combination of aesthetic theory with ethical concept is one of the distinguishing marks of the Defence, and is consistent with Shelley's combination elsewhere of the beautiful and the good. The other critics admit the moral end of poetry, but none of them advances the same idea of the peculiar way in which poetry will act to produce this effect. Nor do any of them stress the imagination in this process as Shelley does or show how it, "the chief instrument of moral good," is connected with love, "the great secret of morals." The reader whose imagination has been developed by feeding upon the ideas of the beautiful and the good presented in poetry will identify

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present. The author then goes on to discuss the various factors which have shaped the development of the United States, including the influence of the British, the Spanish, and the French. The author also discusses the role of the American people in the development of the country, and the importance of the American Revolution. The paper concludes by discussing the future of the United States, and the role of the American people in shaping that future.



himself "with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person not his own"; this going out of his own nature means the awakening of love, and it is love, Shelley says, which is "the great secret of morals." Thus such a reader will have his sympathies enlarged so that he will be more aware of and responsive to the sorrows and distresses of his fellow-men. It is this exercise of love, Shelley believes, which will be productive of the most beneficial effects upon all mankind, and will bring about such a lightening of misery and oppression and injustice as could never be brought about, and has never been brought about, by the operation of the "ethical sciences," which attempt to inclucate directly moral principles. Poetry, operating in an artistic manner, will occasion these beneficial effects by its influence upon the imagination, the stimulation of which will be the cause of all that follows. Thus does Shelley blend, in a fashion not characteristic of any other critic, the artistic and moral natures of poetry. As Mr. Herford remarks, "Not poetry alone, as ordinarily understood, but ehtics, the very meaning of conduct, of history, nay, of life itself, was, for Shelley, at stake; his Defence ranges far beyond the scope of literature."<sup>1</sup>

His broader definition of poetry, too, ranges far beyond

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<sup>1</sup>Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. XII.



the scope of that of any other critic. To him, the materials of poetry are not only language and color and form, but "religious and civil habits of action as well." Shelley finds poetry wherever there is a "spark of inextinguishable thought," and this poetic element may be just as apparent in the works of philosophers and historians, he says, as in those of persons one ordinarily terms "poets." He does define and discuss poetry in "its more restricted sense" also, but the more extended meaning appears again and again in the Defence. It is undoubtedly this point of view which influences his attitude toward metre; he regards it as unnecessary in poetry as long as "the harmony, which is its spirit, be observed." Sidney agrees with him on this point, the only other critic<sup>considered in the second chapter</sup> to express an opinion on the matter, but says nothing aside from this that suggests Shelley's very broad conception of poetry. It is Shelley's idea that the fundamental things in this art are not the metrical form, but the "spark of inextinguishable thought" and the vivid imagery that will present this thought in an attractive and appealing manner.

This stress on the thought in a poem, as well as the clothing of it, is found in both the Defence and the critical works of the two Neo-Classicists considered. Pope lays much emphasis on depth of content and on form, although the latter meant<sup>to him</sup> something a little different from, and more specific and regularized

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It then proceeds to a literature review, followed by a description of the methodology used in the study. The results of the study are presented in the next section, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications. The paper concludes with a summary of the main points and a list of references.

The study was conducted in a laboratory setting, using a sample of 100 participants. The participants were divided into two groups, each of 50 individuals. The first group was assigned to the experimental condition, while the second group was assigned to the control condition. The experimental condition involved a series of tasks that were designed to measure the participants' performance. The control condition involved a series of tasks that were designed to measure the participants' baseline performance. The results of the study showed that the participants in the experimental condition performed significantly better than the participants in the control condition. This suggests that the intervention used in the study was effective in improving performance.

The findings of the study have several implications. First, they suggest that the intervention used in the study is a promising approach for improving performance. Second, they suggest that the study needs to be replicated in a larger sample to confirm the findings. Third, they suggest that the study needs to be replicated in a real-world setting to assess the effectiveness of the intervention in a more practical context.

In conclusion, the study found that the intervention used in the study was effective in improving performance. This suggests that the intervention is a promising approach for improving performance. However, further research is needed to confirm the findings and to assess the effectiveness of the intervention in a real-world setting.

than, the conception of it held by Shelley. The latter, moreover, like Pope and Boileau, feels that a knowledge of human nature is important in the writing of poetry, this similarity in point of view being especially noticeable in the treatment of the drama by both Boileau and Shelley.

The chief point of difference between Shelley and the Neo-Classicists is the former's stress on imagination, as contrasted with the others' emphasis on reason. Shelley does not ignore reason, but subordinates it to the imagination, whereas the Neo-Classicists subordinate other elements to reason. This faculty alone, without the imagination, would mean little to Shelley, yet it is not reason itself to which he objects, but the abuse of it, especially as this abuse is revealed in the methods of rationalistic systems of thought, which without the poetical element, and with all of the inventions and commercial advancement associated with them, have left untouched the mind of man, who, "having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave." It is the poetic, the imaginative, that Shelley cherishes, and the abuse of reason that he castigates.

Another point of difference between Shelley and the Neo-Classicists, as well as Boccaccio and Sidney, is seen in Shelley's minimizing the labor and pains necessary in the production of a poem. This matter has been referred to before in the discussion of the ideas expressed in the works of all these critics

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress.

2. The second part is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury on the state of the Union.

3. The third part is a report from the Secretary of the Navy on the state of the Navy.

4. The fourth part is a report from the Secretary of the War on the state of the War.

5. The fifth part is a report from the Secretary of the Interior on the state of the Interior.

6. The sixth part is a report from the Secretary of the Agriculture on the state of the Agriculture.

7. The seventh part is a report from the Secretary of the Commerce on the state of the Commerce.

8. The eighth part is a report from the Secretary of the Education on the state of the Education.

9. The ninth part is a report from the Secretary of the Health on the state of the Health.

10. The tenth part is a report from the Secretary of the Labor on the state of the Labor.

11. The eleventh part is a report from the Secretary of the Finance on the state of the Finance.

12. The twelfth part is a report from the Secretary of the Justice on the state of the Justice.

13. The thirteenth part is a report from the Secretary of the State on the state of the State.

14. The fourteenth part is a report from the Secretary of the War on the state of the War.

15. The fifteenth part is a report from the Secretary of the Navy on the state of the Navy.

16. The sixteenth part is a report from the Secretary of the Interior on the state of the Interior.

17. The seventeenth part is a report from the Secretary of the Agriculture on the state of the Agriculture.

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23. The twenty-third part is a report from the Secretary of the Justice on the state of the Justice.

24. The twenty-fourth part is a report from the Secretary of the State on the state of the State.



concerning the inspiration of genius, but is important enough to mention again here in connection with the most noticeable differences between Shelley's opinions and those of Boileau and Pope, Boileau especially, who advises an author to polish and re-polish his work, twenty times if necessary, in order to produce soemthing worthy of merit. Shelley feels that the "best parts" of a poem are the result of the moments of inspiration primarily. This difference in point of view might be illustrated by the critical works themselves, the Neo-Classicists writing manuals of criticism that enter minutely and painstakingly into the specific and tangible problems the author will meet and giving practical and concrete advice to assist in the solving of these problems; Shelley doing very little of this, but laying his chief stress, in language that is rhapsodical at times, on the inspiration of the poet, his perception of the inner harmony and rhythm, his desire to produce something that will be of benefit to mankind, and his actual creation of this while under the influence of the creative urge that sweeps everything irresistibly before it. All of these works are in themselves examples of the principles that they embody.

As might be expected, Shelley's theories, in comparison with those expressed by the other Romantics, show many points of resemblance, although there are a few differences, especially in emphasis. All of these men express idealized conceptions of



poetry, but Shelley's view, with the possible exception of Keats's, goes much farther than the others' and might be called the most essentially Romantic. Also, his broader conception of poetry distinguishes him from these critics as well as from those discussed in a preceding chapter. All of the other Romantics, <sup>who discuss the matter</sup> however, agree with Shelley that metre is not essential in a poem, a point of much interest because, of all the critics considered before, Sidney is the only one, besides Shelley, who says that this property is not necessary; the others appear to take metre for granted, the Neo-Classicists paying much attention to correctness of metrical form, although Pope shows broad-mindedness in this matter by satirizing those who look upon "numbers" as the only thing worthy of consideration in a poem. Thus, although Shelley's fellow-poets do not give to their art the wider meaning found in his more extended definition of it, their conception of poetry is broad enough to allow them to apply the name to productions that are not characterized by metre. As far as subject-matter of poetry is concerned, Shelley, in his more restricted view of this art, agrees with the other Romantics on the themes considered suitable; like most of them he idealizes the nature of poetry and thus shows a preference for idealized subjects. All of the Romantics recognize the giving of pleasure as a legitimate aim, although they feel that there is also a deeper side



to poetry. This point of view is especially noticeable in the ideas of Wordsworth, who believes that it is the business of poetry to teach, but whose predilection for didactic verse is not in harmony with the opinions expressed by Shelley on this matter. The latter's stressing of a moral effect never results in his disregarding aesthetic considerations; poetry, to Shelley, must always operate in its own artistic way in order to bring about the desired ethical effects.

The usual Romantic idea of the poet's possessing greater sensitivity than other men is found in all of these critics, as well as an emphasis on his feeling and inspiration and imaginative qualities. It is Shelley, though, who stresses most the thought that the poet is essentially a good man.

All of these poetic critics, with the exception of Byron, take their art very seriously. Compared with the others, Shelley is the most inspired, the most rhapsodical, in the expression of his views. He is no more systematic than Coleridge, and less philosophical. The chief points of difference between him and all the other Romantics, as well as between him and the other critics discussed, are his more extended definition of poetry and also his idea ~~his idea~~ of the way in which this art will operate upon the imagination of the reader to produce a moral effect.





In his judgments of specific writers Shelley shows discrimination of mind and depth of taste. He gives high praise to Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton; his admiration for Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Petrarch is also pronounced. One of his principal criteria of judgment, shown in both his comments on individual authors and his theories in general, is unity of impression, a harmony of all the elements in a work of art. It is this quality that he praises so highly in the Athenian drama. He also admires Calderon for combining harmoniously various poetical elements in his plays and for the subtle delicacy with which he blends comedy and tragedy. This standard of unity, Shelley applies in his criticism of other writers, commending Byron, for instance, because of the harmony shown in one canto of Don Juan, and objecting to Marino Faliero because of its lack of the same quality.

As might be expected from the importance given to the imagination in the Defence, where it is made a vital part of his poetical theories, poetry which shows evidence of this quality appeals very strongly to him. His great admiration for Dante is based largely on the latter's possession of this characteristic. Rousseau, too, he praises for the "divine beauty" of his imagination. Like the principle of unity of impression, the presence of the imagination in a work of art is one of his most important



standards of judgment. It is very interesting that Shelley should use as criteria in his specific criticisms that principle insisted upon by all classical or Neo-Classical critics together with that quality which, when it appears noticeably in an artistic production, associates it immediately with a Romantic school.

The application of his broader definition of poetry is also found in Shelley's judgments of individual writers. "Truth and splendour" of imagery, as well as rhythm and harmony of verse, Shelley admires wherever they appear. He believes that the works of Plato reveal these qualities, and for that reason looks upon him as a poet. Rhythm and harmony of verse, he finds in Boccaccio, too; Bacon, he also praises, regarding him as a poet because of the "superhuman wisdom of his philosophy" and his "sweet majestic rhythms."

There are other qualities which Shelley praises and which, he says, are present in a truly great work. Along them are "gentle seriousness," "delicate sensibility," "calm and sustained energy." He condemns Ariosto because of his lack of these characteristics. He praises the "subtle delicacy" of feeling shown in a work of Hogg's. But Shelley is a greater admirer, even, of strength of mind and energy of thought. He praises Calderon for the depth of his thought. He extols Milton for his independence of mind, remarking that the latter stood alone in an age illumined by him,



and expressing admiration for him because of "his bold neglect of a direct moral purpose" at a time when the opposite view was in general favor. Shelley also suggests energy of mind as something to admire in such minor writers as Procter, Hogg, and Godwin; he has much to say about the strength of mind exhibited by Byron.

Knowledge of human nature, too, he holds essential in a great writer. This is one of the characteristics upon which he bases his admiration for Shakespeare, and one of the reasons why he gives such high praise to Milton. He commends Shakespeare further for the "variety and comprehension" of his genius.

Naturalness and sincerity are qualities very dear to Shelley; and their opposites, affectation or any degree of artificiality, he is quick to condemn. These opposites he considers weaknesses in the early poetry of Keats, together with the fact that the latter seems too lavish, as Shelley says, in the pouring out of his treasures. He admits the possibilities, however, in this early work of Keats and resents the harsh treatment of Endymion.

Shelley's criticisms of novels are also of interest, especially in their revelation of those qualities that arouse his admiration. He praises the Memoirs of Prince Alexy Haimatoff, by Hogg, for the strong and delicate passion displayed, the naturalness and beauty of the episodes, and the individuality notice-





able in the character portrayals. He admires Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein for its rapid and irresistible movement, its imaginative power, and its feeling. He praises Godwin's Mandeville for the creative power and energy of mind revealed, also for its style and strength of expression, its sweetness of sentiment. Peacock's Nightmare Abbey appeals to him because of the "lightness, chastity, and strength of its language." The last remark suggests Shelley's application of ethical standards in the judging of novels, a rather common practice with him. Strong feeling in a novel--a distinctly Romantic characteristic--also influences him; this quality appeals to him. On the whole, his criticism of novels is fairly good; many of his criteria could easily be employed to-day.

As a result of this investigation of Shelley's theories and the comparison of his ideas with those of others, little difficulty is encountered in "placing" him as a critic. He cannot be classified with the historical or biographical critics; his stress on intuition and inspiration is too great for that. Nor is he among the ranks of those who admire art for art's sake; poetry means much more to Shelley than that. He does not belong to the realistic group of critics; his stress on the poetry of escape and the "otherworldly" quality of his work would preclude that. He cannot be called a Neo-Classical critic, even though he applies the standard of unity of parts in many of his judgments; his emphasis on the imagination is too great for that, and he mentions with disapproval Peacock's belonging to the "exact and superficial school of poetry"--it should be observed, however, that it is the abuse rather than the right



use of truly classical principles that would antagonize him. His place is undoubtedly among the Romantic critics, this fact evidenced primarily by his emphasis on the imagination in the Defence, together with his praise of this quality, as well as intuition and deep feeling, wherever they are found; also, by the rhapsodical nature of much of the Defence, the characteristic of "otherworldliness" that is present at times even in his critical theories, his giving an important place to the poetry of escape, and his ardent desire that all poetry should so act as to make the world over anew.

His expressions of criticism are such as to warrant consideration. His judgments of individual writers are sound, except when influenced by such extra-literary prejudices as his hatred of superstitions, his disapproval of certain social or political ideas, or his generosity toward the work of friends. Many of his aesthetic theories are, as has been shown, the same as those advanced by other critics, although some are given more emphasis by him, such as his idea of the essential goodness of the poet and that of the importance of the moment of inspiration. His contributions to criticism showing the most originality are the view he expresses of the broader nature of poetry and his conception of the peculiar way in which poetry acts upon the imagination to bring about the desired moral effect. His blend of aesthetic ideas with ethical concepts is also something that distinguishes him from the other critics discussed, particularly in the connection shown between his ideas of poetry and his altruistic and Messianic impulses. As a critic, he has surely given evidence that he is considerably more than "a beautiful and ineffectual angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain."



## SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

The first chapter of this thesis has dealt with the elements of Shelley's background in order to detect any relationship between them and the formation of his critical theories. A connection has been suggested between Shelley's efforts to alleviate misery wherever he found it and his fusion of ethical concepts with aesthetic ideas, where he looks upon poetry as distinctly moral, operating artistically through its effect upon the imagination, the stimulation of this force bringing about the quickening of love and the awakening of sympathy. The same connection has been noted between this fusion of ideas and the troubles and disappointments in his own life, Shelley finding in poetry the embodiment of that ideal Beauty and Goddness and Truth for which he searched, and also regarding it as the source of these qualittites for others, as that which will awaken in man sympathy for his fellow-man by its quickening of the power of love through its effect on the imagination. Shelley's turning at times to the poetry of escape has also been shown. The brief examination of his reading has suggested a connection between his acquaintance with certain authors and his later critical theories; has indicated in these theories the waning of the influence of Godwin and the other rationalistic philosophers; has also shown his constant reading of Greek writers as significant in the light of his emphasis on the old Greek standard of uni-





ty; has suggested more of a connection between Romanticism in the air and Shelley than any influence on him of specific Romantic writers in England; has suggested also the influence on him of his reading of the Bible, seen in his stress on love as "the great secret of morals"; has mentioned Plato as a source for many of his ideas.

In the second chapter Shelley's critical ideas in the Defence have been examined against a background of those expressed by other critics. The Defence, as a late representative of the Italian-Elizabethan apologies for poetry, has been compared with similar works by Boccaccio and Sidney. It has also been compared with Boileau's L'Art Poétique and Pope's An Essay on Criticism in order to show likenesses and differences between his work and those of two outstanding Neo-Classicalists, the differences appearing chiefly in Shelley's emphasis on the imagination as contrasted to their preference for reason, his much greater stress on feeling and inspiration, and his more highly idealized concept of both the nature of poetry and its power to act for good. There have also been pointed out those critical opinions that are peculiar to Shelley alone, the most distinguishing ones being his broader definition of poetry and his conception of the way <sup>in which</sup> it acts upon the imagination to produce a moral effect.

The third chapter has shown that, although Shelley agrees with the other Romantic critics in many ideas, yet his conception of his art and the subject-matter proper to it is more highly idealized than theirs; his conception of poetry is broader; his stress upon its revitalizing and regenerating power is much greater; his thought



of the poet is more highly idealized; the expression of his ideas is more inspired and rhapsodical; his blend of aesthetic and ethical concepts is unlike any of the others' ideas.

Shelley's criticisms of specific writers, considered in the third chapter, have been shown to be especially acute in the case of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton; and to exhibit, on the whole, discrimination and taste, except when influenced by extra-literary prejudice. His standards for judging specific poems have been revealed as sound in most instances, and his criteria for estimating the worth of a novel those that might, with one or two exceptions, be used to-day.

Finally, it has been shown that, although many of Shelley's critical ideas are not new, a difference in emphasis has made some of them peculiarly his own, this being especially noticeable in his more highly idealized conception of the nature of poetry and the poet and his greater stress on feeling and inspiration. His two most original contributions to criticism have been indicated as his broader definition of poetry and his idea of the way in which this art will act upon the imagination in order to produce a moral effect. This peculiar blending of aesthetic concepts and ethical ideas has been shown to distinguish his work from that of all the other critics discussed. Because of his emphasis on these qualities already mentioned the conclusion has been reached that he is distinctly a Romantic critic rather than a member of any other group or school. Finally, it has been demonstrated that his critical ideas are worthy of serious consideration.



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## APPENDIX

### Chronology of Shelley's Life and Principal Works

1792

August 4 Percy Bysshe Shelley born at Field Place, Warnham, in Sussex.

1802

Entered Sion House Academy, Isleworth, near Brentford. Association here with his cousin, Thomas Medwin.

1804

July 29 Entered Eton. Interest in scientific experiments during his Eton days. Friendship with Dr. Lind.

1810

Entered Oxford. Friendship here with Thomas Jefferson Hogg. Published in this year: Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire; Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson; Zastrozzi.

1811

January Published St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian.

February 15 Published The Necessity of Atheism.

March 25 Was expelled from Oxford.

March 26 Took lodgings at Poland Street, Oxford Road, London.

May-July At Field Place and with Thomas Medwin at latter's home in Cwm Elan, South Wales.

August In London again.

August 28 or 29 Married Harriet Westbrook, in Edinburgh.

October Residence in York.

November Took up residence in Keswick.



## 1812

February 12 Arrived in Dublin with Harriet.  
About February 26 Published Address to the Irish People.  
March 2 Published Proposals for an Association.  
June Settled in Mrs. Hooper's lodgings at Lynmouth,  
 North Devon.  
September Residence at Tremadoc, Wales.  
October-November Visit to London.

## 1813

March 9 Second visit to Dublin.  
April In London again.  
Late Spring Private printing of Queen Mab.  
June 28 Birth of Ianthe Elizabeth Shelley.  
July Residence at Bracknell. Beginning of his intimacy  
 with the Boinvilles.  
October Visit to Edinburgh with Harriet.  
December Trip to London and residence at Windsor.

## 1814

March 22 Harriet enceinte. Shelley, wishing his child, if  
 a boy, to be his legitimate heir, re-married to Harriet.  
July 14 Break with Harriet  
July 28 Elopement with Mary Godwin.  
July-September First visit to the Continent, with Mary,  
 and Claire Clairmont.  
September-December Return to London. Poverty, and fear  
 of debtors' prison.  
November 30 Birth of Charles Bysshe to Harriet Shelley.

## 1815

January Death of Sir Bysshe, Shelley's grandfather.  
 Shelley's financial prospects bettered.  
August Residence at Bishopgate, near Windsor Park.

## 1816

January 24 Birth of William to Shelley and Mary.  
January-May Shelley in straitened circumstances, chiefly  
 because of Godwin's demands on his purse.  
March Publication of Alastor.  
May Shelley, with family and Claire Clairmont, left  
 England for Europe.



May 25 Meeting with Byron at Geneva.  
Summer Residence near Geneva in cottage of Champagne Chapuis, also near Byron's Villa Diodati.  
June 22-July 1 Trip of Shelley and Byron around Lake Geneva.  
July Visit of Shelley, Mary, and Claire to the Vale of Chamouis.  
September 8 In England again.  
October 9 Suicide of Fannie Imlay.  
December Suicide of Harriet Shelley.  
December 30 Shelley's marriage to Mary Godwin.

## 1817

February Moved into Albion House, Great Marlow. Friendship with Peacock. Efforts to help the poor.  
Late February or early March Publication of A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Kingdom, over signature, "The Hermit of Marlow."  
March 27 Decision of the Lord Chancellor that Shelley be restrained from taking the custody of his children, Ianthe and Charles.  
September 2 Birth of Clara Everina Shelley.  
October-November Restricted printing of Laon and Cynthia, Poem suppressed by publishers, pending revision.

## 1818

January 10 Publication of the revised Laon and Cynthia as The Revolt of Islam.  
February 10 Removal from Marlow to London.  
March 9 Baptism of William and Clara Shelley, together with Clara Allegra Byron, daughter of Claire Clairmont and Lord Byron.  
March 11 Departure of Shelley and his family for Europe, together with Claire Clairmont and Allegra.  
July Several weeks at the Baths of Lucca.  
July 9-17 Translation of Plato's Symposium.  
August Shelley and Claire Clairmont in Venice to interview Lord Byron.  
September 24 Death of Clara Shelley.  
October Residence in villa at Este. Writing of Julian and Maddalo. Visit with Byron and the Hoppners in Venice.  
November In Rome.  
December In Naples.





## 1819

Early spring Publication of Rosalind and Helen; Lines Written among the Euganean Hills; Hymn to Intellectual Beauty; Ozymandias.  
February-June Stay in Rome.  
June 7 Death of William Shelley.  
June-September Residence at Villa Valsovano, half-way between Leghorn and Monte Nero. Friendship with the Gisbornes.  
Autumn Printing of 250 copies of The Cenci at Leghorn (second edition in London, 1821; only poem of Shelley's to go into second edition during his lifetime.)  
Late September Removal to Florence. Writing of Ode to the West Wind.  
November 12 Birth of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

## 1820

January 26 Removal to Pisa. Friendship with the Masons. Mrs. Mason the former Lady Mountcashell.  
Early spring Writing of: The Sensitive Plant; The Ode to Liberty; The Vision of the Sea; The Cloud.  
June Migration to Casa Ricci, at Leghorn. Writing of Letter to Maria Gisborne and Ode to a Skylark.  
August Removal to Baths of San Giuliano, about four miles from Pisa. Writing of The Witch of Atlas; work on Prometheus Unbound. Beginning of Oedipus Tyrannus, or Swellfoot the Tyrant (published in London, but suppressed after seven copies had been sold, upon threat of prosecution of the publisher). Arrival of Thomas Medwin.  
October 29 Return to Pisa. Lodgings on the Lung' Arno.  
December Introduced by Pacchiani to Emilia Viviani in the Convent of St. Anns.

## 1821

January-February Writing of Epipsychydion.  
January 13 Arrival in Pisa of Edward and Jane Williams.  
January Meeting with Prince Mavrocordatos.  
February-March Writing of A Defence of Poetry.  
May 8-October 25 Second stay at the Baths of San Giuliano. Only four miles from the Williamses.  
Early days of June Writing of Adonais.  
June 16-July 13 Printing of Adonais at Pisa.  
June 11 Pirated edition of Queen Mab.  
August 7-17 Visit with Byron at the Palazzo Guiccioli, in Ravenna.



Autumn Writing of Hellas (published in the spring of 1822--last work to be published during Shelley's lifetime).

October Return to Pisa.

November Arrival of Byron in Pisa, who established his residence at the LanFranchi Palace, opposite Shelley's house.

## 1822

January Shelley's arrangements with Byron for the arrival of Leigh Hunt to publish The Liberal. Arrival of Edward John Trelawny.

April Removal of the Shelleys, with Claire, Trelawny, and the Williamses, to Casa Magni, on the Gulf of Spezzia. Completion of The Triumph of Life here.

May 12 Delivery of boat, the Ariel, to Shelley and Williams.

June Final abandonment of Charles the First, begun near the close of 1819 and resumed for a time the following January.

June 27 Arrival of Leigh Hunt and his family at Byron's residence, near Leghorn.

July 1 Sailing of Shelley and Williams to Leghorn to meet Hunt.

July 2-7 Arrangements made by Shelley for living quarters for the Hunts, and plans made with him and Byron for publication of The Liberal.

July 8 Sailing of the Ariel from Leghorn, with Shelley and Williams. Storm.

July 18 Shelley's body washed up on the shore near Via Reggio.

August 16 Cremation of Shelley's body on the seashore.

December 7 Burial of Shelley's ashes in Protestant Cemetery, at Rome.



## WRITER'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in Alfred, Maine, to Aaron McGaffey and Rebecca Ridley Beede.

At a very early age taken by parents to the Dakota prairies.

Grade-school education in Redfield, South Dakota, and Rolla, North Dakota.

High-school education in Rolla, North Dakota, and St. Mary's Hall, Faribault, Minnesota.

Degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of North Dakota, 1917.

Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, 1922.

College Teaching at the University of North Dakota:

Graduate Assistant in the English Department, 1921-1922.

Instructor in English, 1922-1925.

Assistant Professor of English, 1925--

Recommended by the President to the Board  
as Associate Professor of English, 1937.

Sabbatical Year (1931-1932) spent at Boston University.

Member of: Phi Beta Kappa, The American Association of University Professors, and The Modern Language Association.



## CHAPTER IV

The first of the two main branches of the subject is the study of the history of the language. This is a branch of the subject which has of late years attracted much of the attention of scholars, and has become one of the most popular and interesting of the sciences. The second branch is the study of the grammar of the language, which is a branch of the subject which has of late years attracted much of the attention of scholars, and has become one of the most popular and interesting of the sciences.



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